

MUNSTER ABBEY,

A ROMANCE:

INTERSPERSED WITH

REFLECTIONS

ON

VIRTUE AND MORALITY:

WRITTEN BY

SIR SAMUEL EGERTON LEIGH:

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Virtue, our present peace, our future prize.

Man's unprecarious, natural estate,

Improveable at will, in virtue lies!

Its tenure sure; its income is divine.

YOUNG.

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MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. I.

THE trite remark, that appearances are often deceitful, held too true of the French Peer.—He possessed nothing noble but his title.—He remained, however, some weeks at Munster Abbey, and received every attention which benevolence could suggest.—Yet, amidst all that politeness and hospitality which he experienced, a certain captiousness in argument, a peevishness in his temper and manner, and an indisposition to be pleased, rendered his society far from agreeable to the mild and gentle spirits of the family who had taken him under their pro-

tection. He discovered in his conversation and conduct, more and more every day, that littleness of soul, and that contractedness of sentiment, which are the mortifying concomitants of want of education and liberal knowledge ; and which rarely even conversation with the world, superadded to rank, can supply the place of. For the Marquis de Ville Neuve, independent of his own natural gaiety, which often betrayed him into acts of folly, let fall several hints which rendered it perfectly clear that nurture and admonition of no valuable kind had been his lot in early life :—that his father was a man who, adorned by no literary accomplishment himself, treated with contempt every species of learning ; and looked upon all men of knowledge and science as mere pedants.—He also gave Mr Belford and family to know, that he was the darling of his mother ; that he was from a child indulged in every request he made, and not the least check given to those follies and extravagancies of youth, which require all the delicacy, and prudence, and address, of the wisest parents to regulate by the laws of moderation.—What could be

expected from the son of such a father and mother?—And what can be expected from any of the children of persons of superior rank, or superior fortune, when their parents are so criminally neglectful of forming their minds, at an early period, to the love and practice of virtue? In every age, and in every nation, a sacred attention to the education of youth of the higher orders, has been productive of personal, domestic, and public blessings, beyond all possible calculation: While, on the other hand, a general neglect on the part of parents of high rank, or of superior affluence, have brought in its train the most fatal effects to their own families, and to society at large. No powers of mind can estimate the extent of the bad influences of ignorance, inattention, dissipation, and profligacy, in persons of elevated stations in life.

Though the delicacy of attention displayed, on the part of Belford and his amiable lady and daughter, to the Marquis de Ville-Neuve, would have excited the warmest emotions of gratitude, in a virtuous and grateful breast, yet, scarce any such im-

pressions as these were made on the unformed spirit of this unworthy guest. Gentle and placid, however, as Belford's temper and manners were, the unhandsome returns which the Marquis made for the many obligations conferred upon him, and the increasing unpleasantness, and, sometimes, rudeness and insolence of his manners, determined all the family to treat him with that polite distance and reserve, which would lead him quickly to perceive, if he had any degree of understanding or penetration, that it was their desire, rather to untie the knot, than to cut it.—Accordingly, so much brains being left to this feeble Marquis, as to permit him to observe a change of disposition towards him in all the family, he soon after took an opportunity to express his sentiments of gratitude to them, particularly to Aurelia ; but in such a constrained and unnatural manner, as indicated the callousness of his own heart ; while it filled the honourable mind of Belford, with sensations of the most pungent nature.—The Marquis, after a speech worthy of his intellects and his dispositions, imparted his intention of setting out, next

morning, for the continent. Belford, agreeable to his most gracious and uniformly amiable character, attended the Marquis two stages from Munster Abbey, and then, with an honest and warm heart, took leave of him, wishing him every sublunary blessing.

It is impossible for the attentive mind to look back on the scene which a few weeks presented itself to the eyes of the lovely Aurelia ;—to mark her unexampled humanity and tenderness for an unknown fellow-creature, whom she found almost in the agonies of death : to reflect on the steadiness and perseverance with which she continued, to a late hour, to administer relief to him, and to recover him to some degree of strength :—to follow the miserable man to the sacred mansion of Belford :—to see him there treated, for many weeks, with the affection of fond parents :—to behold him restored to perfect health :—surely it is not possible to take such a retrospect, and not, at the same time, be filled with indignation and horror at the ungrateful returns

of this unprincipled, untutored, and unnatural Gallican.

Without doubt, one of the severest trials which humanity is called to contend with, is a cold and unfeeling return for acts of kindness, mercy, and benevolence, which we confer on our fellow creatures;—and still more so, when these acts are bestowed in a manner wholly disinterested. Such ill returns unhappily tend to sour the minds of too many who aspire to the character even of sanctity. But if, from injurious and ungrateful conduct from those whom they have even loaded with favours, they become tinctured with peevishness, and, of course, with misanthropy,—let such men not dare to assume the garb of a religious profession. “Never to be weary in well-doing,” is one of the sacred mottos of the sons and daughters of genuine benevolence and true religion;—at the same time, prudence and wisdom unite their voices in dictating many lessons of caution and reserve, after we have been frequently disappointed in our hopes and sanguine expectations of kind returns.

As soon as Belford met again his beloved wife and daughter, it was natural for the family to cast their eyes back on the history of the scenes which had presented themselves within a few weeks past :—and here the native virtue, the candour, and “that charity which thinketh no evil,” were displayed in the gentle and calm discussion of the conduct of their recent guest. His defects of early education, his natural, national levity, his many temptations to dissipation, his want of understanding, were all pleaded alternately by the heavenly inhabitants of this terrestrial paradise, as alleviations of his improprieties, his errors, and even of his rudenesses.

The day after Belford returned from escorting the Marquis de Ville Neuve, he resolved to put in execution a plan which he had formed a considerable time before, but which had been interrupted by his close attention to this French stranger. The plan was, to make a tour over all his large estates in the adjacent counties ;—to learn precisely the condition and circumstances of every

peasant, of every cottager, and of every villager ;—to take down in writing, with as much accuracy as in his power, every particular relative to their moral characters, modes of living, and their industry ;—to examine into the state of the manufactures within his domains, and to observe which of them were in a prosperous, and which in a declining condition ;—to affix, in his own mind, certain premiums for the industrious tenant, and labourer, and villager, and tradesman ;—to find out every young person of distinguished quickness and excellence in his calling, and to take him under his special protection ;—and, finally, to leave at each house or cottage, a small treatise, of a few pages, composed with perfect simplicity, by himself, which should contain plain rules for sober and virtuous living,—for a sacred regard to rational piety,—for hating all strife and division about any subject relating to religion and government,—for peaceable and quiet dispositions,—and for faithful attachment to their King, Country, and Constitution.

This patriotic plan was worthy of the heart of Belford ; and he delayed not to proceed to the execution of it.—As soon as he was able to arrange all his scheme in proper method, and to take correct notes of all the particulars which were to engage his attention, he set out, with enthusiasm, on this patriotic employment.—In the course of three weeks, by the aid of an intelligent and accurate secretary, a man well versed in letters, and in domestic affairs, he made the round of his several estates, to the joy and transport of every virtuous and well-doing inhabitant, and to the terror of all the idle, intemperate and worthless.—On the first, he bestowed these rewards which he judged proportioned to their merit :—to the last, he mingled gentleness of manners with severity, and counsels of wisdom and affection, with marks of just displeasure.

The effects of the benevolent and judicious operations of this great and good man exceed all description. The several orders of people on his estates, persons of all trades and callings, vied with each other in efforts

to preserve, or to gain the favour and esteem of the beloved Lord of the Manor. His example roused the torpor and indolence of some proprietors of land in his vicinity.—Gentlemen of good estates began to be ashamed when they saw the tenants of Belford drawing double and treble stores of grain from their fields, to what their most knowing farmers could bring their own grounds to yield. But a spirit of emulation is the parent of all excellence. By degrees the flame spread to a very considerable distance in every direction in the country. Munster Abbey was the resort of all the nobility and gentry of the adjacent countries.—Every query they were pleased to prefer to the patriot, (for with this most distinguished of all appellations he was now dignified by all the country round,) he endeavoured to solve with his usual goodness and affability :—He had early applied to the study of agriculture, and united two qualities too seldom combined in the same person, great knowledge and great modesty :—He carried on a regular correspondence with the most celebrated men, for their acquaintance with the theory and

practice of this noblest of all arts, in every quarter of the kingdom;—and his house and table were at all seasons open for their reception.

In the course of a few years, the face of the country underwent a complete change. —Heath, whin, and broom, had now almost disappeared;—lakes and marshes were drained,—and new creations of thousands of acres of rich and valuable soil were gained, which had lain useless since the flood.

Few characters among men,—indeed scarce any, claim more respect and affection,—nay, veneration,—than a man of rank or of opulence, who, possessed of large estates in land, devotes much of his time and attention to bring his lands to the highest possible degree of cultivation: Every man of this condition, who, from the time he enters on his estate, endeavours by every effort to distinguish himself as the patron and support of the farmer,—deserves a statue to be erected to his memory;—nay, every gentleman, of even moderate

property, merits the praises and blessings of his countrymen, who is assiduous in the melioration of every acre around his mansion-house, and in giving every encouragement in his power to the industrious farmer who rents his fields. But when we subjoin another quality to the zealous cultivator of the earth, we complete his character;—the quality I mean is, generosity of soul in giving proper leases to his tenants,—and in treating them as his children,—and not as *mere dependents*, whom he is entitled to squeeze by cruel racked rents. It deserves also to be mentioned, that every gentleman of estate, and whose family has been of some standing, should be acquainted to a certain degree with classical learning. This accomplishment, with good sense and good breeding, throws a lustre over his character, more striking, nay, more brilliant, than all the titles and honours which princes can bestow. On the other hand, a more pitiable, a more melancholy object, cannot present itself to the eye of taste, elegance, and discernment,—than a man of property, which has descended by inheritance to him for gene-

rations, utterly illiterate, vulgar, void of public spirit, and, perhaps, a hard lord to an industrious and sober peasantry. Such a being is a moral and political nuisance;—and, though he deserves not to live, yet the order of society requires that he should be permitted to exist. Of this order of squires, and higher than squires, we have some in every corner of Britain.

Nations advance to maturity only by degrees: Much improvement, and much polish of every kind are yet to take place, ere the higher orders of men in the three kingdoms throw that lustre on their elevated station, which can alone dignify and adorn their characters.

While Belford was assiduously employed in these schemes of private and public benevolence, which increased the stock of rural happiness and prosperity around him; a circumstance occurred which tended to affect in some measure his domestic felicity. His lovely daughter was universally admired, and, independently of her superior beauty, she possessed the enchanting quality of

having a very superior fortune in prospect. —These united allurements have produced wonderful effects on the minds of admirers of the fair sex in all ages, The eldest son of a wealthy Knight of a very old family, and of a handsome fortune, was one of Aurelia's devoted admirers.—The name of the Knight was Sir John Hidley. The heir apparent was a young man of an elegant appearance, and had much of the man of fashion in his address and manners. But young Hidley's accomplishments were merely external:—He had nothing in him to gain the esteem, or to win the heart, of a lady of so superior a nature, as the object of his affections. One weakness, or rather disgusting failing, in the opinion of a woman of understanding, marked this young man to a very great degree. It was an incessant loquacity, at all times, and in every company, without any regard to superior rank, or knowledge, or age, or profession. This indication of defect of intellect, not to say of becoming modesty, rendered him contemptible in the mind of the discerning Aurelia: And though his form was elegant, and his address and manner (as we have al-

ready remarked) were very superior, yet his fair inamorata justly and wisely concluded, that no rank, no fortune, no exterior qualities whatever, can compensate for weakness, absurdity, and folly, in a companion for life. The young Knight had already declared his passion, but his addresses were received with that marked coldness, distance and reserve, which every woman, who is not a coquette will consider it a point of honour to observe towards a man to whom she is determined not to give her hand. Indeed, it was with this most amiable young lady a fixed principle, which no temptation of grandeur, or even of princely splendor, could shake, never to give her hand, when she could not at the same time bestow her esteem and ardent affection. By this principle, she uniformly regulated her conduct towards the many admirers who solicited her affections.

Young Hidley, however, resolved to persevere in his addresses to Aurelia; relying, no doubt, on the consciousness of his superior fortune, and of external personal qualities. The lady continued to follow her

determined purpose:—she received him with cold civility,—nay, sometimes with indications of aversion. A fool discerns nothing quickly, nay, he often misinterprets what a moderate degree of understanding discovers intuitively. Taught, too, by the licentious or ignorant companions to whom his passion was known, that all women are coquettes in love,—that they are creatures of mere affectation,—and wish always to enhance the value of the honours and favours which they are to confer on their lovers:—instructed by these lessons of folly and falsehood, Hidley persevered to harrass and teaze this amiable young lady to such a length, that a peremptory command, not to enter Munster Abbey, was the consequence.

But the sage instructors of this foolish youth did not cease to assure him, that Aurelia's conduct was mere coquetry;—and did not fail to repeat to him daily those mean, false, and licentious maxims which govern the minds of libertines, in their addresses to women of honour and virtue. They insinuated, (in their coarse expres-

sion,) that Belford was the channel, by which the fort was to be attacked with success,—and that the prospect of ten thousand pounds a-year, to be added to the estates which he was to leave to his daughter, would not fail to make a powerful impression on his sentiments. But men of unprincipled minds, and of dissipated lives, can form no just idea of what passes in a heart of such spotless purity as Belford's. He had perceived the attentions of young Hidley for a few weeks past, and had just taken the resolution to impart his own sentiments on this momentous business to his beloved child, when the lover made his appearance in the avenue to Munster Abbey. Belford met him a few yards from the house, and gave him the opportunity he wished for to open his mind for the first time to him, on the subject of his attachment to his daughter. After having declared, in strains of rapturous affection, his admiration of Aurelia,—and requested, with the most ardent importunity, the favour and countenance of her father, this amiable parent calmly and politely addressed him, with these sentiments, which can be easily anticipated by men of

understanding and worth. He assured Mr. Hidley, in very handsome terms, that he was perfectly sensible of the honour he did his daughter;—that his birth and fortune gave him a title to address any lady in the kingdom;—and that, on his own part, he had no objection to his general character, but that he had formed an unalterable resolution, never to prescribe to his daughter in a matter of such infinite importance as marriage. His paternal counsels, he added, were ever ready to assist and direct her views;—but beyond counsel and direction, he would never proceed one step in controuling the choice of Aurelia, in whose prudence, judgment and taste, he had reason to place the most unlimited confidence:—He assured the young man farther, that, in the mind of his daughter, and in his own mind, too, birth and fortune were but secondary considerations, when so serious and so interesting an object was before them, as an union for life; and that he was firmly persuaded Aurelia had not yet seen that man who so perfectly answered to her idea of accomplishment, that she could venture to spend her life with him.

After this full and honourable explanation on the part of Belford, Hidley declined urging his suit any farther: besides, he did not forget the positive prohibition sent him by Aurelia, to interrupt her domestic tranquillity, by the continuance of addresses which were so unpleasant, and which never could be successful.





MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. II.

MEANWHILE, the joy and innocent festivity of Munster Abbey flowed on in their usual delightful course:—Time was here divided in a rational manner:—The morning was consecrated to studies which tended to improve the understanding and the heart:—After breakfast, the duties of active life engaged Belford, his amiable but delicate spouse, and his beloved daughter:—Every day was marked by some new scheme of benevolence for promoting the happiness, or alleviating the distresses of the poor around them;—and if ever the blessings of the indigent, and of the widow, the fatherless, the orphan, and the forlorn, ensured happiness to any individual or to any family, it was doubtlessly showered by merit.



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ful heaven on this angelic family.—But every sublunary enjoyment is mingled with a destined alloy.—For sometime past Mrs Belford's health was visibly on the decline, although her complaints had never been so severe, as to exclude her from partaking of the amusements and pleasures of the family, and of company.—In the ensuing spring, however, the symptoms of decline became alarming, and, upon consulting the first medical characters in the kingdom, it was deemed necessary that she should travel to, and inhabit for some time, Montpelier, in the south of France, the salubrity of which has so often proved efficacious in decays :—And accordingly, with as great expedition as the requisite preparations could be made, they set out from Munster Abbey with a suite becoming their rank. The prayers of all their neighbours attended them :—and tears of the poor flowed with unaffected sorrow for the departure of their beloved protectors, and from their fears that the revered lady of the manor should never again return.

O ye great ones of this world ! how frivolous, how insignificant are all the combined joys and fleeting pleasures which are the offspring of never ceasing bustle and dissipation, compared with that solid satisfaction which flows in upon the soul from the consciousness of a regular discharge of the many relative duties of elevated station, or of superior affluence ! The feeling experienced by this blessed family, when leaving Munster Abbey, must have exceeded all power of expression.—Yet it is in the power of every family of distinction in the kingdom, (if dissipation and folly have not brought them into despised circumstances,) to experience the same pleasures, or at least some degrees of these pleasures, every day, which we have now seen Belford and his family reaping as the reward of their most exemplary virtue.

Temperance and order are the parents of œconomy,—and œconomy alone can permit the affluent to employ a considerable share of their fortune in acts of private beneficence or of public utility.—Confusion and intemperance banish œconomy, and

prevent the possibility of relieving the distresses of the miserable, or of promoting any scheme for the general good. Happy, thrice happy, would it be for the great and the rich, if such maxims as these were inculcated on the minds of young men of fortune from their earliest youth.—We should not, in this case, behold the many miserable objects in city and country, not only wholly useless members of society, but, alas! most pernicious by their contagious examples.—Wise men are of opinion, that when dissipation and vice mark the characters of the great proportion of persons of the first rank in any nation, no remedy but one can cure the fatal malady:—And that remedy is an awful one:—it is national calamity:—may heaven avert it!—but it is in the moral world, as in the natural, effects flow naturally from their causes. If a distempered person has no salutary medicines administered to him, or if the patient obstinately refuses to receive them, dissolution must be the consequence.

After the tender and interesting scene at Munster Abbey was over, the family set

out for Dover, where they arrived on the tenth day by slow journeys, on account of Mrs Belford's state of health. In order to recruit her spirits, which had been infinitely exhausted, even by a short journey, and to amuse her mind, a few days were spent at Canterbury, the ancient and celebrated seat of the metropolitan of England.

Belford was not only a man of consummate moral excellence, but an accomplished gentleman, which no man ever can be, without having received a polished education, and been also careful, after the period appointed for education is over, studiously to improve his mind. He was perfectly acquainted with the history of his country, both civil and ecclesiastic,—and he was equally able and disposed to mention with reverence, to the ladies, many of the names of those illustrious men who adorned the chapter of Canterbury. If there were, among those names, any who, by weakness or folly, had dishonoured their rank, or who, in rude ages, had been transported into acts of violence, by the influence of bigotry and superstition, the benignity of his

soul either concealed their names, or he threw a charitable veil over their imperfections. Belford's elegant, refined mind, however strong his internal disapprobation of characters living or departed, never permitted him to descend to the plebeian practice of abusive expression, coarse epithet, or malignant description. Many departed heroes, in the cause of religion and liberty, he mentioned with rapture to his daughter, though his narrative, from the shortness of time, was necessarily very laconic.

It was on the third day after the family arrived at Canterbury, that Mr Belford and Aurelia resolved to spend some time in visiting the tombs in the church-yard of that city. While they were indulging this melancholy but instructive curiosity, their attention was arrested by a scene truly interesting and affecting :—They observed, at the distance of thirty or forty yards, a young man standing in a pensive attitude, with his hands folded on his breast, and his eyes several times raised to the Heavens, as if he had been transported by the fervours of devotion. Delicacy forbade to intrude

upon the amiable mourner,—for mourning and devotion were mingled in his gestures. However, they gently approached the spot where he was stationed :—He stood silent and motionless, as they advanced :—After a few moments, he beat on his breast, and exclaimed, in the agonies of grief, “ O my ever, ever beloved Louisa !—my ever revered and adorable sister !—here lie your sacred, your dear remains !—but I know, I know your immortal part is now united with the blessed spirits of yonder regions of glory and felicity !—If thou art permitted to look down upon the scenes of this lower world, —and if power is given thee by the Almighty to be a ministring angel to frail mortals, O, my Louisa, impart to my soul some portion of that virtue and goodness which irradiated thy whole life, while in this valley of tears.

After these effusions of fraternal piety, he gently moved forward,—and, pausing a moment, he seemed again absorbed in meditation :—But in a little time, he softly turned, and looked back towards the tomb he had just left. At this moment he per-

ceived Belford and Aurelia slowly advancing :—He appeared as if in some degree of confusion :—The tone to which his soul had been wrought up by grief and solemn reflection, did not admit of a rapid transition to observe ordinary objects : But no ordinary object presented itself : The moment his eyes beheld Aurelia, he seemed enchanted,—his looks betrayed the emotions of his soul,—it had a mixture of the wild with the affectionate :—no wonder !—for all who ever beheld his lovely sister, and the daughter of Belford, agreed in observing the most striking similarity in form, in features, and in expression, between Louisa and Aurelia.

It was destined that the present should not be the only interview they should enjoy.—Meanwhile, the family prepared to embark at Dover, and next morning set sail with a fair wind.

The passage to Calais was short and pleasant, save a little sea-sickness on the part of the ladies. In order to indulge the curiosity of Mrs Belford and Aurelia,—and also to give his wife time to recover the lit-

the derangement she experienced from the sea-air, Mr Belford remained three or four days at this once celebrated city. Indeed, there was not much to gratify taste to be seen in the place, or its environs, excepting the fortifications, or rather the remains of these fortifications, which, in former times, rendered it almost impregnable.

Before our family had left Munster Abbey, it was determined to observe, as much as Mrs Belford's delicate state of health would permit, the manners and customs of the several provinces of France ; and of the provinces, or republics, or kingdoms of Italy, through which they were to travel. These remarks were indeed often interrupted or suspended by Mrs Belford's situation, but not so much prevented, as to forbid the party to collect many valuable observations, and even anecdotes, of celebrated names in these countries. From Calais to Rome, the characters, manners, and customs of the inhabitants, bore a wonderful assimilation, compared with their resemblance to those of the sons and daughters of Britain. The sprightliness and levity of a Frenchman is al-

most a perfect contrast to the steadiness, the composure, and even the gravity of the generality of Britons : And it is a curious, and nearly a singular fact, in the natural history (if we may so call it) of nations, that since the days of the celebrated Roman Historian *, the French have retained, among all the kingdoms of Europe, precisely the same character which that great author ascribes to them. It is true, there are various modifications of character and of manners, in the different provinces of France ; but the veritable Frenchman is seen in them all.

In Italy the diversity is striking ; yet a strong likeness is observable by every traveller of discernment. Both kingdoms have given birth in every age to men of high fame and superior worth ; for great are the advantages of their climate, above every other in Europe : But the wretched governments by which they have been for centuries afflicted, has wonderfully diminished the numbers of those men in every order of society, who would in different situations have

* Tacitus.

distinguished themselves by the superiority of their genius, had they lived under the benign influences of a mild and free government. A traveller, however, of taste and education, (for both these qualifications are absolutely requisite in every traveller who would not wish to return to his country with the character of a fool,) must draw ten thousands of pleasures from the vast variety of sources which open to his eye in this delightful and extended tour. The cities, the towns, the villages, the seats of families of rank and fortune, the fortresses, the citadels, the fields, and many of the high roads, are objects of one species which must strike every judicious mind. But the enchanting manners of the people of fashion, their easy, their polite, their disengaged address, form such a contrast to the manners of almost every other European nation, that it must be highly captivating at least to a young mind of an elegant or social turn.—We are here, however, speaking only of those pleasures, or the sources of those pleasures, which are of a secondary nature, where only taste, elegance, fine-breeding, or splendor, present themselves. Of the fountains from

whence more refined delights flow in upon the mind, few, alas! is the number to be discovered by the most inquisitive, or charitably minded traveller. The morality of France and Italy have been for centuries past regulated by a very low standard: Though, as has been mentioned above, many individuals in both kingdoms have shone conspicuous for every quality which adorns humanity; yet, from the nature of the religion and government of both countries, morals, in the higher and lower orders, have been relaxed to a most lamentable degree.

The reader will forgive this apparent digression. The author humbly presumes it may be attended with some benefit to unexperienced and modest young men, who travel into foreign parts in quest of knowledge, and to make observations.

Mrs Belford, for several days, bore the fatigue of the journey beyond expectation;—but at Fontainebleau, she became suddenly affected with a kind of shivering, which justly alarmed her affectionate husband and daughter. By medical aid, how-

ever, and favoured by sound rest during the night, she was able in four days to set out on their journey.

As our travellers were not blessed with the highest spirits, from Mrs Belford's state of health, of course many observations escaped them, which otherwise would have attracted their attention and their taste.—We shall, therefore, without any more history of small occurrences, only take notice, that the route they pursued was not exactly towards Montpellier.—From Fontainebleau, they proceeded through Orleannois, Nivernois, Bourbonnois, Lyonnois, Auvergne, and Languedoc, to their place of destination.

Short stages, and gentle motion in their carriage, enabled the amiable invalid to support her spirits to a wonderful degree. They were, in fact, considerably supported by one object, which must strike every traveller with astonishment,—and which presented itself towards the close of their journey :—this was the canal of Languedoc, begun by Lewis XIV. in 1666, and com-

pleted 1680.—The object which this strange and inconsistent Monarch had in view by this wonderful work,—was to form a communication between the Ocean and the Mediterranean, for the more speedy passage of the French fleet.—But, after a most enormous expence, it has not answered the end intended by it. It was carried on above an hundred miles, over hills and valleys,—and even through a mountain, in one place.

After a journey of nearly seven hundred miles, the family of Belford arrived at Montpellier, which they effected in eleven weeks. Mrs Belford, as well as Belford and Aurelia, were charmed with the place. Of the purity of the air,—and the serenity of the sky,—they had formed no idea before their arrival. The beauty also, and the fertility of the country all around, were enchanting.

They had not been established in their lodgings many days, when there was a pleasing and striking change for the better in Mrs Belford's looks,—and as remarkable

an alteration in her spirits. But, alas ! these delightful symptoms were of short duration !—Her constitution was shaken to the foundation :—Her complaints were of the most alarming nature :—And though the most eminent physicians were called to her aid, yet it was visible she was daily losing strength. Another gleam of hope, however, raised the drooping spirits of the best of men, and the most dutiful of daughters ;—and they fondly flattered themselves with the transporting idea of Mrs Belford's convalescence,—from her sleeping well,—and her return of appetite. She rode out in the carriage a few hours every day, and seemed to recover her wonted cheerfulness and spirits. She could receive a small select party, and was much pleased with music, being passionately fond of that heavenly and pathetic amusement.



MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. III.

BELFORD and family had not been more than a month at Montpelier, when the charms of Aurelia had attracted more than the mere attention of many young men of rank and fortune in the vicinity of that place.—Indeed, it was not possible to behold this amiable young lady without admiration and affection, mingled with esteem.—The state of her mother's health, too, gave her something of a more interesting air or cast of countenance :—For, amidst all her polite exertions to shew forth agreeable manners in every company, in spite of the most strenuous effort she could make, the marks of some internal emotions were perfectly visible in her lovely features ;—for she now began to presage that fatal event which not long hence

the decree of heaven had fixed to take place.

A few miles from Montpelier, there lived a nobleman of ancient family, and of ample fortune.—His name was Count de Bryon :—He was now in the bloom of youth, of a graceful person, and of the elegant and accomplished manners which has generally distinguished a man of fashion in France. But he possessed more valuable qualities :—He was a young man of singular virtue and moral worth,—of exemplary filial affection,—and a fond and dutiful brother.—He had acquired fame, too, for other acquisitions, which, unfortunately for the happiness of mankind, are too little valued and respected by the great or the affluent in most countries :—He was highly informed :—A patron of learning,—and the avowed protector of all young men of genius, whose finances did not enable them to prosecute their studies to advantage.

Such is the character of the person who declared himself the professed admirer of

Aurelia. Count de Bryon did not permit his affection to violate the laws of delicacy or prudence:—He had observed in his beloved a superiority of mind, as well as of beauty and form:—He had for many months remarked her discernment, and soundness of judgment:—And, after a period which he considered of sufficient length to put it in the power of Miss Belford to have a satisfactory acquaintance with his character, temper, and dispositions, he embraced the first opportunity of imparting to her the warmth of his attachment, and the sincerity of his esteem. His addresses were made in that respectful and elegant manner, which at once marked the lover and the man of sense.

But it was not the will of heaven that this amiable nobleman should prove successful in his suit. Aurelia received him with all that politeness and attention which it becomes every woman to shew towards a man of honour and character, who offers his all to her disposal. She

expressed the sense she entertained of the very high honour conferred upon her by Count de Bryon,—her opinion of his exalted worth,—and her great respect for his general character :—But, with that firmness and dignity which never forsook her, she acquainted him, that there were several very serious reasons which at present determined her not to enter into the married state :—One above all was decisive :—this was, the alarming state of her mother's health. Her exquisite sense of delicacy and propriety, would not permit the idea of change in condition at present to enter her mind ;—and, after expressing in the strongest terms her gratitude for his partiality, she requested of him to withdraw his attentions, and to cease to make any future applications of the same nature, as her vows and resolutions were irrevocable. The Count behaved like a man of proper spirit and dignity. He was perfectly sensible that Miss Belford abhorred the vice of coquetry even in idea, and that the spotless purity of her heart revolted at the thought of playing with the affections and happiness of men of honour.

Such characters he knew were too common in both sexes ;—but he also knew, that the frequency of the crime never could lessen the infamy of it ; and that none who were guilty of it, became, in future life, either happy husbands or wives. This prudent and spirited nobleman, therefore, resolved from henceforth not to visit Aurelia, nor a second time to solicit these returns of affection which it was not in the power of a woman of her principles to make. He therefore judged it to be the wisest step he could take, to travel into some foreign country,—and there, not only dissipate his present melancholy, but also add to that stock of knowledge which he had already stored up. Like a man of reflection, he concluded also, that time and experience would enable him to judge more clearly and decisively of the probable response of any fair one whom he should in future pay his addresses to, before he preferred the last question.

From the conduct of Count de Bryon, the giddy and unthinking part of the

world, which indeed compose a wonderful proportion of it, will be apt to conclude that he was a very cold and stoical lover. —Such a conclusion is worthy of levity and thoughtlessness. With a few exceptions, teasing, importunities, and perseverance, as it is called, have not enabled one of a thousand lovers to gain his prize;—but, even then, what sort of prize has it always turned out to be?—of little value! —Of little value did I say,—of none at all:—For, caprice, whim, and coquetry, are the blessed ingredients of the character of a woman who purposely keeps a man in suspense for months,—nay, for years, after she is resolved to accept of his hand at last. This conduct is utterly beneath a woman of principle;—and yet it is not equal in criminality to the behaviour of those who have at the same time many men kept in a species of thralldom, by practising upon them silly imposition and deceit, which nothing but judicial infatuation could prevent them from detecting.

We may take the liberty farther to observe, that neither in our drama, nor on the stage, have these vices, practised so frequently by dishonourable men and women, been exposed to that just odium and indignation which their levity deserves :—Levity is too fair a term :—But what can be more unfeeling in man or woman,—what can be more unprincipled and immoral,—than to wantonly sport with the time, health, peace, and character of a fellow-creature ? Every day affords instances of unhappy consequences following from a blind attachment to the most unworthy objects. May some happy, superior genius be raised up by heaven, who shall possess the powers of a Demosthenes or a Shakespeare, to rouse general horror at the character of coquette in either sex, to expel them all society, and to condemn them to eternal celibacy !

That melancholy hour now approached, when Belford and his amiable daughter were to be called to sustain one of the heaviest shocks which our frail natures are heirs

to,—the loss of an amiable and beloved spouse, and of a fond, affectionate, and dutiful mother.—Mrs Belford's decline had hitherto been gradual ;—and, at times, there were some gleams of hope, that the original strength of her constitution might overcome the malignity of her distemper ; but of late, that is, about four months after they had been at Montpelier, the decline was visibly rapid.—The ablest medical aid was called in :—but no hopes were entertained of convalescence by the physicians, by the afflicted Belford and daughter, nor by the amiable Mrs Belford herself. Kind heaven was so gracious and indulgent as not to appoint to her acute pain. She gently wore away :—She preserved her understanding in full vigour :—She conversed with Belford and her darling child, with the utmost composure, and gave her, with many blessings, every affectionate and solemn counsel :—She warned her, by every thing sacred, never to seek for happiness in any sublunary object :—to guard her heart against attachment to any of the other sex, be his rank or fortune ever so high, unless she had sa-

atisfying evidence that he was a man of virtue and of moral worth. She, with her dying breath, deplored the lot and fate of so many poor females, and some of them too of high birth, who, from their circumstances and situations for life, were induced to sacrifice their persons at the shrine of misery. In her last moments, she ascribed this fatal conduct in so many, rather to the absence of all principle, than to indigence of condition,—insisting strenuously, that a truly virtuous woman, however dependent, will sooner encounter every difficulty, than throw herself into the arms of a profligate or a villain, because he is great or rich. For some days after Mrs Belford had poured forth the best, warmest, and most pious sentiments of her soul to her beloved child, she was favoured with an interval of comparative freedom from pain :—nay, the fond hopes of the dear husband and daughter were flattered with the prospect of returning health.—But, alas ! this was but a delusion of the affections :—Nature was exhausted : A very short time after these favourable symptoms appeared, suddenly strong indications

of approaching dissolution called forth all the sentiments and emotions of connubial and filial love, in the breasts of Belford and Aurelia. Mrs Belford, after exhausting her remaining strength, in blessings and prayers on her husband and daughter, fell into a kind of torpor, which turned into sleep for many hours :—and, after lifting her eyes, and looking benignantly, but faintly, around her, she raised her hands ;—she made a sign for Belford and Aurelia to approach her,—heaved a deep sigh,—and expired in the arms of her affectionate husband.

The scene which ensued no fancy has ever possessed power to paint, much less any orator to describe :—There are, and ever have been, distresses in human life, which baffle all human eloquence to present, even to the soul of sensibility, in their genuine colours.

The grief of the afflicted survivors did not resemble the boisterous and noisy sorrow of common minds :—It was internal woe. It brooded on the soul :—The re-

sources of religion were not wanting,—for Belford and his daughter were pious,—but rationally pious:—they mourned,—but they mourned not as those “who have no hope :” —They were mortals,—therefore they were not possessed of perfection :—They indulged, with full flow, the tears of ardent love,—but, amidst all the overflowings of sorrow, they retained the dignity of principle, and recollected, that “there is an appointed time to man upon earth.”

Heaven graciously conferred on Belford and Aurelia that composure of mind, and tranquillity of spirits, which enabled them to regulate, with propriety, every circumstance respecting the last honours to be paid to the memory of her who was no more. The generous and enlarged mind of the British Protestant, pitied the miserable and contracted spirit of ecclesiastical domination, which forbade christian burial to any Huguenot ; or, at least, forbade that any Protestant should be buried in the same cemetery with a Roman Catholic.—This was a matter of no moment to Belford :—His principles were too exalted, and his under-

standing too enlarged, to regard in what spot of this globe the ashes of his beloved were deposited, provided they were laid down with decency and solemnity :—With singular decency and solemnity they were deposited ;—for in Montpelier, and its close vicinity, there were many families of the first respectability who professed the Protestant faith :—The principal men of that profession attended Belford to perform the funeral rites to the remains of her who was now a seraph in glory :—and even, it is affirmed, the Catholics, in numbers, saw, with tender sensibility, the melancholy procession, and mingled their tears with those whom they dared not to join :—For such was the popularity of this delightful family of Belfords, that they were but a few weeks established in Montpelier, when the fame of their superior virtues was carried over all the place, and indeed over all the numerous parties which are always to be found there, in quest of health or pleasure.

The last solemn offices being paid to the departed saint, the disconsolate husband and child found they could relish none of

the gaieties of Montpelier. Though many invalids were assembled here, yet the far greater part of the visitors were blessed with perfect health :—And the continued rounds of balls, assemblies, and routs, little accorded with the tone of souls whose feelings were wound up to the highest pitch of grief, and to the strongest desire of solitude.

Accordingly, after settling, with his usual accuracy, every particular respecting the funeral of his beloved wife ;—after having made a handsome present to a landlord who had paid singular attention to his family ;—and leaving a fifty pound bill for the poor in his vicinity, Belford ordered his carriages to be ready early next morning to proceed for Italy.

It was necessary to travel slowly on account of Mr Belford and his daughter's health and spirits ; for they were deeply affected by the late melancholy event.

Interesting as many objects were which presented themselves on the journey, yet they did not gratify their curiosity by re-

maining at any stage or town, above a few hours, and to repose at night, till they arrived at Turin. At this noble city they remained eight or ten days, and viewed with admiration the fortifications, which are equal in strength to any in Europe. This metropolis of his Sardinian Majesty could have afforded great variety of elegant amusements to our travellers; but, in their present state of mind, they could enjoy none of them with any degree of relish. They visited, however, all the principal public buildings, cabinets of curiosities, and the public libraries.—In this there was nothing but the simple indulgence of a rational curiosity, and the gratification of taste.

Resolved to see most of the chief cities of Italy, without taking the shortest route to Rome, Mr Belford bent his way next for Milan.—Aurelia joined with her father in praises of the Milanese.—That country is the most delightful and the most fertile in Italy. And the approach to the city is beautiful beyond description. Both Milan and its citadel are fortified strongly. It suited the present solemnity of the minds of the

travellers, to take a view of one of the most magnificent Cathedrals in Italy. It was one of the first built after the venerable Gothic taste ; and its treasures, in ecclesiastic riches of gold and silver, and precious stones, will one day become a valuable prize to some formidable invader.

During their short stay at Milan, one morning an uncommon spectacle presented itself to their astonished minds. It was a young man, dressed after the English fashion, dragged by a furious mob along the street where they lodged. Mr Belford instantly dispatched his first servant, with one of the sons of his landlord, to learn the cause of this violence ; when he was in a few minutes informed that, in fact, this was a young English squire of fortune, who had insulted a religious procession as it passed through a street in close vicinity. Mr Belford did not delay one moment to make enquiry to what persons, civil or ecclesiastic, he should make application, in order to attempt to rescue his foolish and rude countryman from, perhaps, public punishment. Fortunately for the young man, Belford had interest and

address to get access to a venerable churchman of a liberal mind, and a benevolent heart. An adept in the Italian and almost every modern language of Europe, he informed Father Contini that he had got perfectly good information that the foolish young Englishman, who had offered the insult to the rites of religion of this country, was scarce nineteen years of age—that he had last night been revelling with a few more of his British brethren to a very late hour,—that the fumes of wine had not yet forsaken his head, when he perceived the procession pass his windows, and, amidst delirium, sallied out into the street, to commit the act of folly for which he could offer no apology, but youth and ignorance. The good old man bid Belford make himself perfectly easy : he assured him that the head of the convent to which his countryman was carried, was a worthy honourable man, and that he would himself instantly accompany Mr Belford to Father Arrigoni's apartments. They immediately proceeded ; and found poor Spencer the culprit brought before ten or twelve stern countenanced priests. Spencer was placed at a kind of

bar, and, besides his austere looking judges, he was surrounded by guards and officers of the peace, by clerks, and the whole solemn inquisition.

Father Contini, who enjoyed high benefices in the church, and who was a personal favourite of his Holiness of Rome, was no sooner observed to enter the place where the assembly was held, than, with a steady and commanding voice, he demanded an audience, before one article of procedure should take place against a young and friendless stranger in a foreign land. Belford was astonished at the awe which Contini's dignity of demeanour impressed on the countenance of every one of the sanctified judges, and even on the countenances of the ruffians who surrounded the prisoner. In a short, but liberal and eloquent address, he informed the court of all the circumstances relating to the young man's conduct ;—pleaded the cause of youth, of folly, and ignorance : He enlarged on the generosity of the English nation towards all foreigners, particularly towards the nation of Italy : and concluded, by requesting that

Spencer should make, by an interpreter, a most humble apology for his conduct, and pay a moderate fine to the Convent of Dominicans. Without debate or hesitation, the chief of this blessed assembly agreed to the request of Father Contini, and young John, after a hearty drubbing, and a more hearty fright, was dismissed.

The benevolent priest, who became Spencer's protector and counsellor, carried Belford and him to his own house, where, in a mild, yet solemn manner, he offered him his most earnest advice never again to commit the same offence in this, or in any other country ; but, on the contrary, whether he should travel into Turkey, or China, or Indostan, to remember it was one characteristic of an accomplished gentleman, to pay a marked external respect to the rites of religion of every country.

After addressing Spencer in this serious and kindly manner, he requested his guests to take a little refreshment after the fatigue of the morning. They politely and gratefully accepted the invitation. Meantime

Contini, who was a man of learning and enquiry, and had hitherto never known any instance of similar outrage to have happened at Milan, requested of the young Englishman to be so obliging as to give him a short account of his family and education, benignantly hoping that his relation might afford some apology for his conduct.

Spencer, after expressing himself in a very handsome manner to Father Contini, for his singular benevolence and kindness, readily agreed to indulge his benefactor's curiosity, and thus proceeded.

“ I am the eldest son of a wealthy squire in the south of England, who traces his origin beyond William of Normandy :—His name is Spencer :—He is a worthy good-humoured man, beloved by all his peasants, and by all his neighbours :—He has a rent-roll of ten thousand sterling a year, with no more incumbrance than ten or twelve thousand pounds :—He has been too indulgent a father ; and one of the fatal effects of this indulgence you have this day witnessed. My mother also did not fail to

contribute her share in disqualifying me for acting with prudence when I should go into the world. I had not attained my tenth year, when my father, (who loves money,) employed the curate of the parish to look out for a tutor, (or governor, as the term is in my country,) for the domestic education of three sons. The curate was, like too many of his poor miserable brethren, not only a man of little erudition, and less taste, but he was the ten times humble servant of the family of Spencerhall. Well aware that my father would reluctantly pay fifty pounds a year out of his ten thousand, to a pedagogue with whom he could not converse (for my father had, like his son, woefully neglected his education), the poor dependant curate procured him a low-born, ill-bred lad, from the fens of Lincoln, for thirty pounds a-year :—His name was Tom Hopper :—Tom looked like a clown, and a fool,—and a clown he was ;—but no portion of the last quality formed any ingredient in his composition. Tom quickly saw the cue of the family, and, in a few days, thoroughly discerned the weak side of every man, woman, and child of the house.

The elements of knowledge, only, this elegant tutor had to impart to his three pupils ; and it was the first and the strictest charge he received from my father and mother, and an old aunt, who governed all, that Hopper was never to contradict, reprove, or punish, in the slightest degree, any of the young gentlemen ;—nay, more, he was enjoined and commanded not to teach them a longer lesson than one hour.

“ Tutor Hopper remained in the family five years. At the expiration of this period I was sent to Oxford, a seminary of learning which has sent forth more philosophers, and more fools, than any in the world. Of the merits or demerits of that University, as to the ability and industry of its teachers, I profess not to be a competent judge. But this I fatally know, and do now experience, when I am afraid it is too late, that, what with the ignorance, the low-breeding, the sycophantish manners, and the want of principle in my domestic tutor, and what with the reverse (in manners, at least,) in my academical superintendant, who was a professed buck and a fine gentleman, I left

Oxford in the beginning of my nineteenth year, (that is about 6 months ago) thoroughly disgusted with tutors, professors, and books : For I saw I had been lost in my earlier education, and that the habits in which I had been bred up, of living half my time in the stable-yard, or about the kennel, had prevented me from acquiring any taste for letters. - Indeed, I wrote to my father to deliver me from this learned Purgatory, as I termed the University ; and I had his immediate permission, by return of post.

“ But I was not full ten days returned, when Sir Charles Chase, a neighbour of my father, paid us a visit, and expressed his surprize at my leaving Oxford before the usual time of attendance at that place. The old gentleman explained to the Knight, in a manner perfectly adapted to his intellects, the reasons of my return to Spencer hall :—he assured him that the young man’s spirit was broken by being compelled to read Latin two hours a day, and spend one hour in some other dry pedantic employment, and that upon Dick’s application he had agreed to receive him at

home with all his heart, in order to be perfected in the noble and rational arts of fox, badger, and hare-hunting, which would brace his nerves, invigorate his whole constitution, and give him the ideas of a gentleman.

“ His honour Sir Charles, though a man who will never overturn a state, had yet such a quantity of understanding as to perceive something exceedingly erroneous in Spencer’s future plan of life for his son ;—and, rousing up all his latent powers, with such eloquence as he possessed, he conjured his friend to alter his intentions respecting Dick ; and by all means to send him abroad to see the world, or, as it is called, to make the grand tour ; and to be particularly careful to find out, at any expence, an accomplished person, half tutor, half companion for his son,—a man of a liberal mind,—not very nice about certain points of moral manners,—and divested particularly of all religious prejudices :—that is, one who considers all kinds of religion on the face of the earth, as equally true and equally false. He assur-

ed Spencer, that with such an enlightened guide, young Dick could not make one false step till he returned from the continent,

“ My father received the knight’s counsel with evident symptoms of approbation (for I was present) and without deliberating one moment, swore, that as soon as he could procure the said tutor, his son should set out for Paris. One month had not elapsed, when I embarked at Dover,—attended by a person qualified apparently, as Sir Charles and my father wished,—a handsome, agreeable, easy-tempered, gay, thoughtless fellow of one or two and twenty, who had never been out of England.—At Calais, we ordered a post-chaise and four. I had two servants, as great bloods as their master and his friend,—and off we set, in the true English stile, at the full gallop, bespattering all who came in our way :—But we galloped a very short way, and went at that pace no more till our arrival at Paris ;—for the drivers, the carriages, and the poor animals who drew them,

were of such a kind that we did not arrive at that city in less than three days and a half.

“ We had never once dreamed of procuring letters of introduction to any persons of rank or fashion in this great city. Accordingly, when we issued forth on the morning after our arrival, we found ourselves two bewildered, stupid beings, who knew not where to go, or what to enquire after.—For I ought to have informed you, Sir, that neither my tutor nor myself understood one word of the language of the country :—All our aid consisted in my first servant’s having a miserable smattering of French, which he had learned from a cook, a native of Gascoyne,—a dialect of that language hardly intelligible by a Parisian. However, fortune favoured us in a very short time. After we had strolled and stared about two or three hours, we observed a young man of a genteel appearance, eyeing us with very particular attention. Imagine our agreeable surprize, when he addressed me in my native tongue, requesting to know

whether I had been lately at the university of Oxford, and if my name was not Spencer. I replied, I had been lately at Oxford, and that he named me rightly. He added, "My name is Tomkins. I had not the honour of your acquaintance in England; but I could not resist the impulse of addressing a gentleman from my own country, when I met him in a foreign land." I assured him that I never felt more delightfully than from this interview, and candidly acknowledged to him in confidence, and not without blushing, that I could not speak one word of French. Tomkins was a young man not only of abilities and of address; he also possessed a warm and a benevolent heart.—He bid me be perfectly at my ease, assuring me that in a few weeks, by being frequently in good company, and by immediately ordering an able master to attend me, I should be able to understand what passed in conversation,—nay, be able to hold some conversation myself."

"Determined to conceal nothing of my present situation from so generous and dis-

interested a benefactor, I frankly told him, that my friend and myself had brought no letters of introduction with us,—and that I made him this confession with shame.

“ It matters not, replied Tomkins :—Answer me fairly, like an open honest Englishman,—of what rank and fortune are you in England?—and where is your hotel here?—and what is your establishment or attendants? I answered him as he desired. And are you, rejoins he, the heir of Spencerhall,—the son of as honest a Squire,—and as honourable a family as in all England. I have heard of your father often,—as an hearty, hospitable, well beloved man by all around him. Be now assured, Mr Spencer, that I shall, with pleasure and joy, perform you a piece of service, or rather discharge a duty, by taking an early opportunity of presenting you to some of the first people in Paris.—I mean not to any of the court. My own rank and fortune, tho’ inferior to yours, is yet such that I have access to many families of the highest respectability, though not all of noble rank ;

—but they are families of distinction, partly by birth,—but more of them by their elegant accomplishments,—and by their virtues and hospitality to strangers, especially to the English, whom they love,—and whom they would love more, if we would throw off some of that rough, horse-racing, and fox-hunting kind of manner which is so offensive to polished minds. I accepted his offers with the warmest gratitude ;—yet felt very awkwardly in the prospect of appearing in a fashionable Parisian circle, as a dumb animal, and with my plain rural or academical manners. But Tomkins bid me take courage, dress well, and assume no airs, but preserve my own natural manners ;—and he added, he would carry me by degrees, from families of lesser polish ; that is, who were not distinguished by high manners, to those who led the van in fashion. In short, I owed infinite obligations to this amiable young man,—and might have owed him many more, if the remains of the miserable habits I had acquired in former days, had not counteracted his sincere wishes for my improvement. I made, however, some exertions immediately. I

called to my lodgings one of the first teachers of the French language in the city :— I spent five hours each day with him,—so did my tutor :—Three hours were employed in lessons, and two in conversing with our teacher. Ten days I spent in this way. —Next morning my kind friend called on me, and informed me, that, if it was agreeable, he would carry me in the evening of that day to the house of one of the noblesse, a Monsieur de la Croix, where I would meet with a polite and kind reception, and find myself quite at home. He told me I should find a man of much information, yet of great modesty, and of most elegant address,—and hoped I would relish so much the first party, as to wish the continuance of them. I made him a grateful return for his goodness, and promised to attend him at seven at night. He was so polite as to call on me at my hotel at this hour, and carried me directly to the house or rather palace of La Croix :—We were ushered into one of the most splendid apartments I ever had seen, furnished in the most sumptuous manner ;—and, on the very moment of our en-

tering the room, the master of the house received us in a manner so superiorly elegant and fashionable, as can be seen only in Paris. In a few minutes his lady, two daughters, and a beautiful boy of eight or ten years of age, joined us ;—and, in half an hour, a crowd of company, all carrying the appearance of rank and fashion. I acknowledge I felt myself by no means at ease :—The society I had hitherto been accustomed to keep,—the plainness or roughness of manners of that society,—I could not resist contrasting with that which now so brilliantly presented itself to my eyes : Added to this, I was ignorant of the language ; so that I neither could address any one of the company, understand one word of ten that was addressed to me, nor comprehend a single sentence of the conversation of the evening. Instead of enjoying, therefore, this elegant society, I was quite unhappy ; a situation, I understand, many of my countrymen, qualified no better than myself, have thousands of times experienced in Paris. I was impatient till supper was over. I was ashamed of my conscious awkwardness, and secretly resolved never

to expose myself in the same manner.—Would to God I had done no more than made this foolish resolution!—Alas! I found good Tomkins' society was too refined for my unpolished mind; and, after this evening, I not only avoided his company, but never again saw him.

“ Next morning, walking with my tutor in the gardens of the Thuilleries, I had the misfortune to meet with two young Englishmen of a very different character from my late friend. They were also Oxonians: I had some acquaintance with them. I am ashamed to mention their names. They were as ignorant as myself; and they were far more dissipated than I yet had been. However, I found their stile and manner of living quite congenial to my taste. Accordingly we dined together that day, and drank till a late hour. We meant to go to the Theatre,—but one of the young men, on reflection, observed that, as we were all much intoxicated, and none of us could speak the language of the country, the most proper step we could take, was, for each to depart for his own lodgings. But before

we separated, it was agreed for us to meet the next day, where my new friends assured me I should find several more additional countrymen, precisely of the same stamp with themselves; all of them determined to make the grand tour, and all of them equally prepared with myself for the expedition.

“ Six weeks I spent in this species of low dissipation, in spite of the remonstrances of my tutor, who, to do him justice, was not only seldom of our parties, but frequently threatened to abandon his charge. One morning, after breakfast, he addressed me so seriously, and with such severity, that I swore I would not bear such liberty to be taken with me by any pedant or tutor on earth. These terms raised his indignation, and he left the room for an hour. On his return, he told me he had resolved instantly to return for England, as it was impossible his attendance could be of any farther benefit to me; and as he saw that, both from the company I kept, and from my growing aversion to himself, he was both a restraint and a burden upon me.

" Like an infatuated fool, I bid him instantly do as he pleased, and abruptly left the room. I set off directly for the Hotel of some of the new corps into which I had entered, a little disconcerted, however, by the squabble with my tutor, and under much anxiety, lest he should actually set out for Britain. Accordingly, after remaining a few hours with my companions, I returned to my lodgings, determined to make a proper apology to him,—when, to my utter surprise, I found he had set out above an hour before I returned, leaving me a very temperate note. I can repeat the words of it. It was very laconic, and made a temporary impression on me.

" SIR,

" It is with sorrow I feel myself under the very mortifying necessity of abandoning a charge, which for sometime past I found could confer neither honour nor credit on me. I leave you with regret ;—and I have only to beseech and entreat of you, that you would forsake that wretched society to which you have attached your-

self, without one day's delay, and, for heaven's sake, with the utmost industry look out for some excellent young man who is travelling for real improvement, and endeavour to join him. I commit you to Heaven's care."

"I was struck to the heart on reading this short epistle. I saw my folly. I sat down and pondered on my past conduct. After sometime spent in as serious reflection as a dissipated mind is capable of, I resolved, without the loss of a day, to follow my tutor's counsel. I was fortunate enough to succeed in my enquiries after a young man of sober manners, and of good education; and who was also a gentleman. In the course of the day, I was informed that at an hotel very near to the one in which I was lodged, there was a Mr Walpole from Sussex, who was to set out for Italy in a few days, and that he would be happy in having an agreeable companion.

"Sensible of my own literary deficiency, of my foolish appearance in not speaking

the French language,—and sensible also of my unpolished manners, I felt very disagreeably on the prospect of calling on one who, though he was an Englishman, I had no acquaintance with, and who might be a young gentleman of such superior accomplishments to me in every particular, that there could be no proper society between us:—Sensible of all these circumstances, I resolved to find out some person of consequence to introduce me to Mr Walpole. But to whom *could* I make application?—The young men I had lately unhappily attached myself to, were the most improper persons in the world to address. My honoured Tomkins I had abandoned.—How to act I knew not. At last I summoned up courage to go and cast myself on the goodness and compassion of Tomkins, who was not only fond of youth, but made the most generous allowances for their follies and errors. I immediately, on collecting spirits, set out for his lodgings;—but, figure my situation of mind,—when I found that he had set out eight days before for England.

“ Necessity is the parent of invention.— Urged by the pressing situation I found myself in to leave this corrupted city, and, if possible, to be introduced immediately to Mr Walpole, I boldly resolved to wait on him personally, and in an honest, open, and unaffected manner, to lay before him very shortly my history since my arrival at Paris. I instantly executed my purpose.— I found this young gentleman at home :— I sent in my name by my first servant, mentioning only that I was lately from Oxford. Mr Walpole received me very graciously,—talked with me a few minutes in a general and easy manner,—and inquired into my future views. This was a fair opening for me. Without any preface, or any attempts to elegance or eloquence of expression, of which I was incapable,—I begged leave to request his forgiveness for an intrusion which I was by no means entitled to take the liberty of making ; and, in simple and plain language, I told him with regret all that had passed since I came to Paris. I expressed my earnest desire to become acquainted with some gentleman of character, who was to make the tour of

the southern part of Europe,—and that having no person in this place to introduce me to him, I had summoned up courage to pay my respects in person, and to request of him, that if he had formed no previous engagement, he would honour me, by permitting me to join him in his travelling into Italy, which I had been informed was his intention. Walpole, in that handsome manner which gains the heart, after thanking me for the partiality which I had discovered for his character, assured me that, from my candid and openness of communication, and from (he was pleased to say) my personal figure, he should account it a very happy circumstance to have so agreeable a companion,—and hoped it would not prove inconvenient for me to set out soon. I expressed my anxious desire to leave Paris as quickly as possible, adding I could be ready in a few hours. In four-and-twenty hours, said he, I shall be ready,—but cannot in shorter time, on account of some material pecuniary business.

“ I remained with Walpole some hours, charmed with his conversation, and in-

wardly highly gratified by reflecting on my resolution, and the success which had attended it. I left him for a little, with many expressions of gratitude,—and returned to my lodgings, determined not to see or take leave of my late companions, and to be scarce abroad, till I should call on Walpole, in order to set out on our journey. I employed a few hours in writing to my father, and some select companions in England;—and I thought it my duty also to write to my tutor.—To all of them I made, in general, a frank confession of my foolish and idle conduct since I came to Paris,—or, at least, a very few days after I arrived there. I requested my tutor to forgive me,—and assured him that I recollected with gratitude, shame, and pain, the honest and friendly remonstrances he had made against my irregular and dissipated manner of living:—I acknowledged the justice of his observations, as to the consequences of such conduct;—gave him a full account of what I planned, and prepared now to execute, respecting my travelling with Mr Walpole:—And I concluded with assuring him, by the most so-

lemn expressions, that if heaven spared me to return to my native country, I should give him the most substantial evidences of my grateful remembrance of the honest discharge of his duty.

“ After settling with the master of the hotel, I waited, next morning, by ten o’clock, on Walpole, whom I found perfectly ready to set out. He proposed we should purchase, jointly, a handsome carriage, which could hold two persons, which could be had in a few minutes. This was instantly agreed on,—and, by two o’clock, we left Paris, to my great joy. After a pleasant journey of five weeks, we arrived at this city, where I have been, I may say with propriety, a pupil, though an unworthy pupil, of this amiable young man. Unfortunately, this morning I strayed from him, and, in the wantonness of folly and ignorance, committed the outrage of which you have heard, against religion and decency. But be assured, venerable and truly holy father, a like offence I shall never commit again.”

from extensions, that if I had not spent so
long in my native country, I should
give him the most substantial evidence of
my grateful remembrance of the labors
and exchange of his duty.

After spending with the master of
the vessel, I left next morning by
sea of course, in a ship, which I found
particularly ready to sail. The captain
and we should have been, I think,
some savings, which could have been
and which could be had in a few
months. The captain's agent of
and by two o'clock we left the
harbor of the great harbor of the
city, where we were, where I have
been, I may say, with a party, a party
though in an evening party of the
young men. I should have said, this morning
I started from home, and in the winter
of folly and ignorance, committed the
crime of which you have heard, against the
law and decency. But be assured, ven-
erable and truly holy father, a like offense I
shall never commit again.



MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. IV.

CONTINI was charmed with the ingenious manner of young Spencer, assuring him, that, in the course of a long life, he had uniformly observed, that wherever openness and simplicity of heart discovered themselves in early life, it was a happy presage of the virtues of more advanced years.—After some conversation with Belford on Italy in general, and of Milan in particular, the benevolent deliverer of Spencer requested the honour of the gentlemen to dine with him next day ; and learning, from something which fell from Belford, that he had a daughter travelling with him, he, in the politest manner, begged her father would permit him to walk to his lodgings, and request the young lady to give the ad-

ditional honour of her company to the party. All accepted, readily, of the gracious invitation.

Though the acts of this half-tragedy were many, they were all performed within the space of four hours. Spencer's seizure, commitment, deliverance, and his narrative to worthy Contini, were all dispatched within that short space.

Mr Walpole had strolled, this eventful morning, about seven or eight miles from the city, and had but just returned, when Spencer entered his apartment, with plain evidences of disconcertment, and something of that aspect which indicates conscious guilt. His friend was a young man of singular decorum : Spencer had discovered this in the course of conversation with him during their journey from Paris. He therefore trembled to open a subject in which he must expose himself as a barbarian. On a second thought, he resolved, however, to give him a full account of the matter, from the moment he committed the unguarded deed in the street, till he left the ever to

be revered Father Contini. This worthy man, instead of chiding him with severity, after the relation of his adventure, only remarked, in a mild manner, "that it was a rule, sacredly to be observed by all gentlemen who travelled for improvement, to respect the rites of religion in every country through which they passed, be they ever so seemingly ridiculous or superstitious."

Without his friend's knowledge, Spencer, after he had related his late history to him, returned quickly to father Contini, and after repeating in the most affectionate manner to him, by his interpreter, his acknowledgment for his transcendent goodness, requested his forgiveness for a liberty he was ashamed to take. Contini bid him use no ceremony, and begged to know what his request was. Spencer mentioned with great modesty the name of an amiable companion who had come lately to Milan with him from Paris, who was at the same hotel with himself; and that, reluctant to leave him alone, he now presumed to request permission to bring him to morrow with Mr

Belford and his daughter.—Contini replied as every well bred man will do.

Next day was a delightful one.—It was a feast to the soul.—It was a repast to taste. Though Contini's elegant entertainment was a mark of his politeness and hospitality, yet still the fascinating pleasures of his conversation surpassed all luxurious indulgence. It not only charmed the enlightened minds of Belford, Aurelia, and Walpole, but even honest Spencer himself was transported with rapture. He began to taste some of those sweets of which a rude and illiterate mind can form no conception, and for which he has no more relish than a Hottentot.

Contini had a history which, however, we shall not here detail. He was not originally bred to the church. He was educated a soldier, and distinguished for courage and humanity from the time he entered the army, till he quitted the service. Among many causes which determined him to give up a military life, the least, he declared, was not the ignorance and licentious man-

ners of his brother officers. He had no alternative but to bear with their wickedness, or forsake their society. The last he embraced,—and, at the age of thirty six, he commenced his theological studies, which he prosecuted with success. For though our worthy father was not bred to the church, as we have just now mentioned, yet he had received a regular academical education, and was an adept in the Belles Lettres. In the course of conversation during this pleasant entertainment, and while the company were at coffee, our venerable landlord frequently lamented the melancholy defects of the officers in various parts of Europe into which he had travelled, in point of liberal knowledge, ascribing it compassionately and candidly to the unhappy modern practice of sending youth into the army, mere boys, uneducated, unexperienced and unprincipled, and where they but too often enter into every species of dissipation and vice.

After many hours spent in the most delightful and rational festivity, the party broke up, but not before Mr Belford en-

treated the Holy Father to honour him with his company the first day which suited his convenience. Contini with sweet affability expressed his desire to join the agreeable society he was about to part with, as next day, adding, with singular grace, that he was seldom blessed with such company. Belford, Walpole, and Aurelia, spoke Italian with fluency. Poor Spencer felt somewhat uneasy, but his sufferings were greatly alleviated by the goodness of his two countrymen in interpreting whatever was material in their conversation.

The next day was a counter-part of the former. All was hospitality, elegance, liberal communication of sentiment, and the harmony of the blessed above. The prejudices of narrow minds in every country, (the offspring of a wretched education) were deplored, and spoken of with becoming pity and contempt. Even the subject of toleration was treated of, by this generous-minded priest, with a freedom and liberality which science and philosophy only could have enabled him to display. But Contini

had been the companion and the friend of the divine Marquis of * Beccaria, than whom a more glorious spirit never illumed the regions of this globe. Aurelia charmed him with the propriety and justness of her observations on whatever she saw since she came into Italy ; and the modesty with which she delivered her sentiments, enhanced their native merit. The company were about to part, when Walpole, with grateful Spencer close by him, came up to Contini, and, with that modesty so charming in youth, begged leave, in the name of his friend, Spencer, who would bless him while he lived, that he would be so condescending as to put it into the power of two young foreigners to say, that they had not only the honour of visiting so illustrious a character in Italy, but had the still higher honour of receiving a visit from him. He beseeched him to forgive presumption, and to indulge their vanity and ambition, by warning a day when he would partake of the best

* A Nobleman of Milan, who wrote an Essay on Crimes and Punishments, which displays the heart of a Divinity.

which their hotel could afford. We may easily conjecture the answer of the good-man.—He complied at once with their request, and the second day after was fixed for the party. Suffice it to say, that the last meeting was perfectly similar to those of the preceding days, and that never any society, so generally acquainted, broke up with more lively tokens of mutual esteem and admiration. One circumstance explains this singularity :—It is this :—Every member of the party was blessed with a good heart and a generous mind. Where these qualities are united in the same person, and where they are united in all the individuals of a society, lesser or greater, there, discord, rudeness, contradiction, scandal, nor any of those demons which haunt the societies of men, dare venture to intrude their detestable heads.

It is the wise destination of Providence, that man should not enjoy a long succession of even refined pleasures, or joys of any kind. His imperfect nature would not admit of such fruition. He would become giddy

and elated, and be apt to forget those more exalted duties, the sincere, rational, and manly performance of which constitutes the dignity of his nature.

The father of the convent and his beloved children must now part,—never more to meet in these realms of woe :—It was an interesting parting :—The venerable sage could not conceal his inward agitation :—He dropt the tear of philanthropy :—The gentlemen were deeply affected. But the gentle, the tender-hearted Aurelia retired from the scene, unable to sustain the shock of taking leave.

Belford, at night, announced his intention of leaving Milan next day, and of proceeding for Mantua, wishing Walpole and Spencer every blessing ;—and offering also, in the most insinuating and kindly manner, his best counsels to these young men.—Spencer poured forth, in return, his prayers and supplications to heaven, that every good which Providence showers down upon the virtuous and benevolent, might be the portion of Belford and his Aurelia.

They took leave, with looks expressive of mutual undissembled affection.

As our travellers proceeded to Mantua, after half an hour's departure from Milan, with paternal fondness, and heaving a deep sigh, Belford thus addressed his beloved child: "My Aurelia, I praise that benevolent Being, the source of all goodness, who mercifully mingles comfort with all our woes,—that, in his mysterious administration, he has made the apparently horrible scene at Milan a few days ago, a cause of considerable alleviation of that load of grief that hung over my spirits. I hope, my dearest child, the elegant, the benevolent, the virtuous, the serious conversation we have enjoyed for some days with the divine ecclesiastic, has impressed you with feelings of a similar nature." "They have," rejoined Aurelia, "they have, my beloved father, attuned my soul to a gentle and composed melancholy, in room of that violent perturbation which for these many past weeks agitated my whole frame. The memory of that good man is indelibly engraven on my soul;—never can it be effaced.

Did you not remark particularly, my father, how feelingly he expressed himself concerning the uncertainty of all sublunary enjoyments,—and of the precarious tenure by which we hold them?—and with what a grace he referred to his own happy change of profession,—contrasted with the miseries and calamities which so many are destined to undergo, by an alteration in their personal, their domestic, or their pecuniary condition?”—Yes, my love, I did remark, with ecstasy, Contini’s heavenly language on these topics, so interesting to you and to me, and all mankind. Such liberality of sentiment in an Italian priest, is a complete phenomenon.—He is not tinctured in the smallest degree with bigotry, and the vile spirit of intoleration ;—but, on the contrary, is entitled, in the fullest sense of the word, to the noble character of Catholic.

Silence for some time ensued, after this conversation, when Belford addressed his daughter in these tender expressions of paternal love : “ My dearest child, by the desti-

nation of infinite wisdom, you are now become my whole solace :—O may heaven spare you to be the staff of my declining years ! I centre, under the Almighty, all my hopes of future worldly bliss in you. I praise that Great Being, who has so conducted all your steps in life hitherto, as to enable me, without partiality or presumption, to anticipate still more substantial happiness. I feel not the most distant apprehension that you will ever give me one moment's uneasiness by your conduct. Such purity of heart, and such innocence of manners you have uniformly displayed. This, this delightful consideration has wonderfully alleviated my grief for your ever beloved and revered mother, and checks any rising complaint against Heaven's decree. Gracious Providence may yet be pleased to confer upon me additional blessings, by restoring us safe to Munster Abbey, and, perhaps, seeing you established honourably at the head of your own family.

We ought to have noticed some time before that Belford continued to correspond regularly from Montpelier with his valua-

ble and faithful steward in England, from whom he received the most satisfactory account of his many friends and dependents. In his last letter from France, he desired his correspondent not to write him again until he should hear from him from Florence, and then, in course of post, to send him a long epistle, addressed to him at Rome, to the care of an acquaintance he mentioned, who was to reside some time in that city.

In three days our travellers arrived at Mantua, once a city of high fame, but now, from various causes, fallen into comparative decay.—All the world knows that Mantua claims the honour of giving birth to some of the most famous Constellations, that have ever graced the literary hemisphere, and (eminent amongst them) here the immortal Virgil first drew his breath.

The fortifications of Mantua are reckoned equal in strength, if not superior, to any in Europe. This place has, for a very long time, made part of the dominions of the Emperor of Germany.

After a short stay at Mantua, Belford and his fellow-traveller visited Parma, Modena, and Lucca, and, in a few days, arrived at the beautiful city of Florence, the capital of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. All the brilliancy of poetic imagery would fail in attempting to convey a just idea to a reader, of the enchanting situation of this celebrated place. It stands between mountains, whose sloping sides are covered with olive-trees, vineyards, and delightful villas, and is divided by the famous river, Arno.

It is impossible for any traveller of taste to pass hastily through Florence. Months might be spent with infinite mental gratification, in viewing the innumerable wonders of art which are to be found here. The palace of the Grand Duke exceeds all description in magnificence ; and also on account of the thousands of cabinets of curiosities which it contains. Excepting in magnitude (for Naples exceeds Florence by far in numbers) it surpasses in beauty and riches every other city in Italy, save Rome. Accordingly, Belford and Aurelia remained above two weeks here, charmed

even to exstasy with the variety of objects which every day presented themselves to their astonished minds. Tens of thousands of instances of original genius display themselves in this wonderful collection:—Indeed human art seems here to have exhausted herself.

It was a most fortunate circumstance for Belford and his daughter, that, on the second day after their arrival at Florence, they were introduced to one of the most celebrated of the Literati of that city. The name of this accomplished gentleman was Ganganelli; distinguished by the urbanity of his manners, and his attention to travellers of such appearance as those who now courted his protection. Ganganelli was a man of birth, and had seen the greatest part of Europe; for he had unbounded avidity for the attainment of universal knowledge. He spoke the English language almost with purity; for he had resided some years in London, and expressed himself with rapture on calling to memory the polite attention and hospitality which he experienced in that metropolis of the globe. Belford felt

the happy effects of his partiality for Britain. They had access, by means of Ganganelli, to see what seldom or never are shewn to the vulgar travellers of various orders; we mean, those persons who, by their observations, and by their ignorance of the Belles Lettres, betray the secret of their having left their several countries utterly untutored, and unprepared to receive those high intellectual repasts which justly belong to the assiduous students of every rank of life. This good Italian's house was almost Belford's and his daughter's home. It was the fixed purpose of his mind honourably to repay, to the utmost of his power, the debt of gratitude for the civilities and friendship he had received in England, by omitting no opportunity of shewing kindness and polite attention to every stranger from that country, who had even the slightest introduction. But his respect for Belford was peculiarly marked; and no less for his fair daughter; for indeed in the countenance of both native goodness and excellence displayed themselves, even to an eye of little discernment.

Ganganelli, however, did not entertain his strangers by mere exhibitions and hospitality. He discovered a particular satisfaction in giving Mr Belford the most minute account of whatever was curious and interesting in the religion, the laws, and the constitution of Florence, and of Italy at large. This goodness was the more gratifying, as Belford had resolved, before he left Munster Abbey, to take down as correct notes as a traveller generally can make, who does not reside long in one place. He had hitherto done, in this way, as much as was in his power ; and Ganganelli contributed not a little to that store of knowledge he was accumulating, and which it was his intention to arrange, when he should return to his own venerable mansion.

Philosophy had enlightened, in an high degree, the mind of this illustrious son of Florence. Belford was, at times, astonished by the freedom with which he spoke of the state of religion and civil liberty in Italy : And when he expressed his surprise at his free and seemingly unguarded boldness of sentiment ; “ Hark ye, my friend,

replied Ganganelli, "thank God, we have no inquisition in this country. Every man, here, who takes care to pay an external respect to the religion, and the ceremonies of the religion of his country,—and who does not, by word, writing, or by any overt action, endeavour to disturb the public peace, may express himself on any subject, in what terms he pleases. I had the honour, and the highest I ever expect to enjoy, to be the intimate friend of a nobleman of Milan, the illustrious Marquis of Beccario, of whose fame, sir, a gentleman of your intelligence must unquestionably have heard. This great and good man, the ornament of learning, and the enthusiastic friend of the human race, blessed the world, a few years ago, with a performance which will live for ever. The title of it you must know :—perhaps you have perused it."—"Indeed I have not," replied Belford, "though I have often heard of its high reputation." "Be assured, then," added Ganganelli, "that this work has pleaded the cause of mankind with more ability and success than any which even Italy ever produced. A statue of gold ought to be erect-

ed to his memory, for that wonderful display he has here made of the moral rectitude and humanity of his own heart. He has, besides, wrought miracles on the minds of even some of our most bigotted ecclesiastics, by his writings ;—and in his life and manners, as well as by his compositions, he has exhibited the most convincing evidence, that a christian, without the spirit of mercy and toleration, is a mere name, an imposition on the common sense of mankind.”

Such was the spirit, such the sentiments of this superior man.—His conversation and society rendered Belford's and Aurelia's stay at Florence truly delightful ;—and it was with reluctance they resolved to leave a place where so much was to be found, to instruct, to entertain, and to charm. But Munster Abbey, with its many attractions which yet remained to solicit their partiality, was ever occurring to the mind of its amiable lord ;—and lovely Aurelia, from time to time, hinted, with her usual gentleness, her anxious desire to re-visit her native land.

Accordingly, after remaining three weeks at this magnificent city, our travellers, with hearts overflowing with gratitude and affection to their polite and elegant patron, waited on him, at his own house, the morning of their departure ;—and both, in the handsomest manner, expressed the feelings of their hearts in the language of genuine integrity. Indeed, what heart would have been insensible to the liberality, the hospitality, and all the virtues of Ganganelli ?—After a mutual and tender advice, this little party separated, never perhaps again to meet ;—not, however, till the most solemn promises were made by the gentlemen to preserve a regular correspondence.

Belford ordered his carriage, and directed the postillion to take the road for Rome. In a very few days, though the weather was unfavourable, he and his beloved daughter arrived at the seat of his Holiness. Elegant lodgings waited them ;—for, by means of an artist from England who resided in Rome, every thing convenient and comfortable, as well as splendid, was prepared for their reception.

No person of classical knowledge, even in a very limited degree, can behold at a distance, much less enter this most celebrated city of all the ancient world, without a variety of emotions, which the poverty of language can never express. It is utterly impossible for a mind even of torpor and apathy, to view the remains of former grandeur, without being struck with awe and reverence. How inconceivable then the feelings!—how undescribable the solemnity of mind of the sons of refined taste.

It was here also the good fortune of Belford to be early introduced after his arrival to a few families of the first rank, and (what is of ten thousand times more consequence) of the first worth:—For it did not suit the present state of his mind, to form a large circle of acquaintance: at no time could he descend to mingle in a promiscuous crowd, and still less at present, when he was in pursuit only of rational or innocent entertainment;—or of adding, at times, something to his stock of knowledge.

Two days after Belford's arrival at Rome, it pleased heaven to send him intelligence which gave him an elevation of spirits, of which he thought himself utterly unsusceptible, from the depression which yet hung over his mind, ever since the death of his beloved wife. The singularity of the circumstance by which this happy intelligence was brought to his ears, deserves attention. It related to his brother Charles, for whom he yet retained a warm fraternal affection.

Turning the corner of a street adjacent to his hotel, after he had been to view one of the ancient amphitheatres, he was accosted by a plain man of ordinary appearance, but of singular benignity of countenance, who civilly requested to know whether his name was Belford. The reply was of course in the affirmative. The stranger told him that he had passed from Dover to Calais in the same vessel with him (Mr Belford) and his family, and had received at the last of these towns a very full account of the character he bore, and public spirit he displayed around Munster Ab-

bey. Belford did not possess one grain of suspicion in his nature ;—yet prudence dictates to every man of common understanding to guard against precipitancy in confiding in address or information, much more when they favour of the mean vice of adulation. He immediately enquired of his countryman, what was his name,—and in what county of England he was born?—“ My name, he replied, is George Roddam :—I was born in the West Riding of Yorkshire,—and am employed here (and I trust with honour and integrity) in collecting various antiques for the curious and the learned in South Britain. But, Sir, he added, at present my time is very precious, for I am engaged half an hour hence with one of the greatest virtuosos of Italy ;—though in all his cabinet of curiosities, there is not one half so great as himself :—Still, however, I can spare a few minutes to give you the pleasant information, that I spent a week at Leghorn with your brother Mr Charles Belford ;—and, Sir, without flattery, which my soul scorns, I will affirm, that a more agreeable and more intelligent man I have seldom or ever met with ;—

though I must at the same time observe to you, that there is an uncommon degree of gravity, if not something of the sorrowful or melancholy, marked on the features of his countenance. He entered on no explanation with me ;—but I several times remarked him involuntarily heaving a deep sigh. He mentioned your name in a general manner once and again ;—though I remember that, in one instance, he suddenly checked himself when he was about to put some question to me concerning his beloved brother (as he expressed himself) whom he had not heard of for a long time.” “ Gracious and benevolent Ruler of the universe,” exclaimed Belford in a fit of ecstatic agitation, “ And is my dear dear Charles alive and well.—I give thanks to heaven, and devoutly trust we shall again meet,—never more to part, till the awful curtain is dropt on the theatre of life. Dear Mr Roddam, give me leave to detain you one moment, by enquiring, whether you learned any thing of the business or profession in which my brother was engaged ?” “ Yes, Sir, I can satisfy you particularly as to this matter also.—

He acts as principal factor, and as partner too, in one of the first mercantile houses in Leghorn. And, be assured, Mr Belford, that he owes his present comfortable and most reputable situation almost entirely to his own merit. Of this I had the most undoubted evidence, when I was for some time in that city. The name of the merchant with whom he is connected escapes me at present ;—but I learned from several persons of character, that he is a man less distinguished by his large fortune, than by his virtue and public spirit,—and that your brother Charles was treated as a brother by his partner.” “ Again, exclaimed Belford, I bless God with fervent gratitude.—My dear dear Charles, I shall now lose no time in acquiring a perfect knowledge of all your history, sufferings, and success. To Leghorn I will instantly dispatch an express, to pour forth by epistle every effusion of my heart to a brother who was lost, and is found again. Meantime, Mr Roddam, I beseech you to forgive me for breaking in upon your business ; suffer me only to entreat you to do me the honour of a call as soon as in your power ; and, if it be in the

compass of my interest or ability, I shall be happy to shew you the sincerity of gratitude for the delightful tidings you have brought me ; for you are a messenger sent from Heaven for my consolation.

After Rodam's departure, Belford remained for some minutes absorbed in a profound reverie. On awakening from it, he hastened, in transport, to carry the joyful news to his Aurelia. Although he found his daughter engaged in conversation with an amiable young lady of distinction, Signora Valentina, he could not resist the powerful propensity of his soul, but instantly, after making a polite address to the stranger, in a tone of voice more loud than delicacy and good-breeding would have warranted on any other occasion, he cries, " O my child, my Aurelia, rejoice with thy transported father !—My brother Charles lives !—he is in good health !—he is as happy as he can be on earth, removed far from Munster Abbey :—he is esteemed, respected, beloved, and is partner with a merchant of the first eminence in the great City of Leghorn. I am this moment to dispatch an express to

him to learn every thing concerning him since our woeful separation, and to entreat his presence at Rome, if it is possible that his affairs will permit him to bestow this ineffable satisfaction on me."

Aurelia's sensibility could scarce sustain the shock ; for excess of joy puts to the test the strength of the human nerves, as well as the excess of other passions :—But, after pausing a few moments, she flew to embrace her father, and, in the strains of an Angel, thus addressed him, with a composure which an Angel only could have displayed :
" To the preserver of men, I offer the devotion of my heart.—While I live, I will trust in that great, all-wise, and beneficent Being, who, by methods incomprehensible by man, brings so often light out of darkness, and order out of confusion.—My ever dear uncle, are you then as happy as you can be at a distance from your native land ?—May felicity attend you to the end of your days on earth ; and may you, my father, and I, soon enjoy the requisite pleasure of seeing this dear recovered friend in these very apartments.

Belford lost no time in sending an express to Leghorn. The language in which he addressed his brother may be readily imagined to be worthy of the warmth of his heart, and the worth of his moral character. He wrote to him in raptures of joy. He gave him a full account of the manner in which he had made the discovery of the place of his abode, of the employment in which he was occupied; and he enlarged with transport on the certain intelligence he had of the esteem and affection he had acquired among all his acquaintance. He then entreated him in the most earnest manner to relinquish his present engagements, unless honour alone should forbid, assuring him that while he lived he should enjoy such a portion of his fortune, as would render him independent and comfortable for life. He beseeched him to set out for Rome, if possible, with the courier; and if that was impracticable, as soon afterwards as in his power.—And here for a little we leave our convert Charles.

As Belford and Aurelia were returning one morning from viewing the most magni-

ificent temple which ever was erected to the Most High, they were agreeably surprised by perceiving, at the window of a hotel, the young nobleman whom they had accidentally met at Canterbury church-yard. The instant he saw Belford and Aurelia, he flew like lightning to bow with most affectionate respect before his beloved; for, ever since he had seen her at Canterbury, the sweet and enchanting idea of her charming features and manners, had been so very powerfully impressed upon his mind, and had in truth so absorbed every thought, and affected his spirits, that his friends daily importuned him to make the grand tour, in order to dispel that gloom and melancholy which had for sometime hung over his mind. But, alas! travelling and variety cannot always banish that nameless something which agitates the soul that is pierced by the fatal dart. Altamont's love was love at first sight,—an idea ridiculed by the soul of insensibility in all ages:—But an insensible soul is seldom blessed with a sound judgment:—Thousands, and tens of thousands, of the most wise, the most pru-

dent, and the most worthy of men, have confessed the force and truth of the adage. Lord Altamont passed the Channel with a heavy heart, unable, by any prophetic powers, to foresee those delights he was destined very shortly to taste. About two hundred miles southwards from Paris, he had somehow been able to trace Belford and Aurelia to Montpellier. Hither he instantly bent his course;—and, though the journey was long, he arrived at Montpellier, not exhausted by it. But Belford and Aurelia had left that celebrated asylum for the infirm in body or spirits, ten days before. Altamont remained no longer at Montpellier, than to refresh himself after a very tedious journey:—He found, from good authority, that Belford and his daughter were gone for Rome, and were to remain in Italy for some months:—One day seemed a year to Altamont, till he arrived at the place where his beloved and her father now resided. After his first discovery of their route, love carried him rapidly along; and, elated with the prospects before him, and the sweet expectations, perhaps, of love returned,—his spirits every moment revived,

health, which had been in some degree affected, became perfectly re-established,—and, in ten days after Belford's and Aurelia's arrival at Rome, he joined them in this mistress of the ancient world.

To attempt to describe, or convey any adequate idea of the joy and happiness of Lord Altamont, and also of Aurelia (for Aurelia, too, acknowledged the truth and force of the adage just mentioned) would require a pencil which has not been hitherto formed by any mortal artist! The joys and raptures of the human soul never have been, nor never can be, described.—Here, as in numberless other instances, the Divine Fiat is pronounced, “Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.”

This delightful English party were introduced to some of the first families of Rome,—and were entertained with hospitality and splendour. Happily Belford, Aurelia and Lord Altamont, were “feelingly alive” to Cecilia's heavenly strains,—and of course, in private parties, as well as in the opera and theatres, engaged all the ecstatic plea-

sure which the powers of harmony can bestow. Ye sons and daughters of men, who are utterly deprived of all taste for the strains of Orpheus, little know ye what it has been the pleasure of heaven to deny you!—Ye, who neither can convey pleasure to others by your own performances, and who feel not the least relish and enjoyment in the most sublime strains of harmony, ye are bound, by very sacred ties, as members of society, to compensate for these mortifying defects, by cultivating the amiable and engaging qualities of affability, gentleness, elegance, sincerity, kindness of heart, and openness of soul!

This happy taste for music was, among others, (yet still far more delicate and refined) an additional bond of union of souls, between Altamont and Aurelia.—Yes: far more delicate and refined, especially in the married state:—For, in this state, a taste for any or all of the fine arts on the female side, will keep possession of the heart of a man of sense and elegance for a very short time, if it is not accompanied by other qualities and accomplishments of a more res-

pectable, and still more fascinating nature. Prudence, economy, sweetness of temper, and gentleness of manners, and, above all, pious dispositions, are requisites indispensable to ensure happiness in this situation.

Aurelia was, in person, dress, and manner, every thing that was elegant and engaging :—For she had been taught, from early life, by her amiable and accomplished mother, those soft and attractive virtues that command the esteem, and irresistably captivate the affections of *men of sense*.

But it was not to the pleasures of harmony only, that our travellers were indebted for the happiness they enjoyed in Rome.—Amidst the weakness of superstition, and the gloom of bigotry, they were able to discover many valuable characters, whose minds, enlightened by rational religion, and the study of true philosophy, soared above every vulgar prejudice. In society of this nature, there was a source of inexhaustible pleasure ; though it must be

acknowledged (from his own candid confession) that Altamont's was frequently observed wrapt up as it were in profound thought, in appearance totally absent from the company. Yet it was not absolutely his love for Aurelia which produced this effect on his manners :—It was the idea of her lovely form and countenance resembling so strikingly his dear departed sister, which often broke in upon his mind, even amidst the most pleasant and instructive conversation.

There was one family of distinction in this city, which paid a very marked attention to Belford and his daughter. It was the family of the Marquis of Solerno :—He was not a native of the Papal dominions :—His estate lay in the territories of the Grand Duke of Tuscany :—But attached to Rome, by his intimate acquaintance with many families of rank, and with many men of taste and learning in this city,—he had for many years resided here, to enjoy the sweets of elegant, entertaining, and of improving society. The Marquis was married to one of the

most accomplished ladies of Italy,—a woman of high family,—and of equal worth. They had no children;—but they were both in the middle period of life,—and were equally blessed with that equanimity, mingled with spirit, which is pleasant to every virtuous mind,—though a rare character in a native Italian.

With this family, and a few others of the same, or of a similar taste and fashion, Belford and Aurelia passed their time in a most agreeable and rational manner:—But we must not omit to remark Belford's attention to Altamont immediately after his unexpected arrival at Rome, by introducing him to all the families of note with whom he himself had been acquainted;—for he perceived in this young nobleman evident indications of so polished an education, and of such excellent dispositions, as must render him a valuable acquisition to any society:—Accordingly, Altamont made one of all the parties in which his benevolent friend and fair Aurelia were engaged. These parties were very unlike the general run of those of high fashion in most of the great cities of Europe, except in

the article of temperance in drinking;—for the vice of habitual intoxication is unknown, is almost unheard of, over all the Continent.—What I mean is, that this happy society admitted nothing of the riotous to approach their presence. Bucks and bloods were a species of animals they knew only by name;—but their manners, principles, and habits, were beheld here with pity and indignation.

Meanwhile, the heart of our young Peer was every day more fascinated by the native charms and manners of Aurelia. She could not be insensible to his partiality:—But both possessed prudence and wisdom above their years:—Delicacy marked both their characters;—delicacy of sentiment and of conduct. Altamont invariably perceived the dignity and reserve of Belford,—and at once concluded, from his general demeanor, that if ever he should be so fortunate as gain his favour, after he had won Aurelia's heart, it must be by uniformity in the practice of every moral quality, as well as every refined and polite attention.

Indeed, it was visible that Belford beheld Altamont already, (that is, in the course of some weeks) with no ordinary degree of partiality. But, whatever secret wishes he might entertain, that this amiable youth should, at some future period, form the nearest connection with his family, every principle of prudence dictated silence on this subject to the world, and even to his beloved child.

Altamont, influenced by the principles of honour and gratitude, equally, if possible, as by the passion of love, made it his study to recommend himself to Belford by the most correct as well as by the most pleasant manners;—and not only rendered himself a delightful accession to his fellow-travellers, but was, every where, received with marks of favour and distinction.

The return of the courier from Leghorn was expected with anxious solicitude:—A day or two later than he might have appeared, a letter from Charles was received, such as might have been looked for from a

man who had seen, in their full deformity, the follies and errors of former days :—He poured forth blessings, in the most affectionate terms, on his brother and niece :—He expressed his gratitude to heaven for his present comfortable establishment, and for the ease and happiness he enjoyed by his connection with one of the first ornaments of the mercantile world. At the same time he regretted, that, even at the generous desire of the best of brother's, he could not leave his present place of residence for some time ; for honour dictated to him, as well as friendship and attachment, that as his partner in trade was not only a valetudinarian, but was also at this time engaged in very extensive concerns, which required the most intense application, he could on no account whatever leave his friend with such a heavy load of business, as might injure his interest, and even his health : But, to the joy of Altamont and Aurelia, he added, that if his brother could prolong his stay in Italy for three months, and return to England by the way of Leghorn, he would make every effort to settle all his af-

fairs by that time, and gladly attend him to Britain.

This epistle produced a very powerful effect on Belford's spirits. Though he enjoyed a consolation which is not bestowed on or experienced by the majority of parents, namely, the society and filial reverence and affection of the most accomplished of her sex, yet, ever since he lost his beloved partner, there were visible traces of melancholy to be observed very frequently in his countenance. Even the intelligence of Charles being alive, well, happy, and respected, gave him but a temporary feeling of satisfaction; for he had no positive knowledge or acquaintance with the person who brought him the information. But when, from his brother's own hand, he received the pleasant accounts confirmed,—when he had evidence most undoubted that, in health, in honour, and in prosperity, he was passing his time in the best of society,—and, added to all, when he read Charles's promise to accompany him back to Munster Abbey; and doubtless promised also to acquiesce in his fraternal and generous proposal to share with

him such a part of his fortune as should render him independent and comfortable, every demonstration of internal transport was delineated in his manly countenance.

When Belford had first received the news of his brother's situation, prudence, which never forsook him, forbade him to indulge the first propensity of his soul, which was to request the honour of a visit from his select friends in Rome, to announce to them the glad tidings, and give them an entertainment suitable to their rank and to the joyful occasion. But he was determined first to ascertain, on the surest information, from his brother himself, the authenticity of his intelligence, that, in case of any error or design in the accounts he had received from a stranger, his folly might have, on discovery, been exposed to public observation. The moment, however, after he perused Charles's letter, he renewed his former intention, and went in person to every family who had shewn him the attentions of hospitality and polite reception, and requested the honour of their company at his lodgings a few days afterwards, in order to enjoy the

pleasure of their society, and to celebrate an event which he should impart to them when assembled, and which he did not entertain a doubt would afford their benevolent minds very high satisfaction.

In the interval between receiving Charles's letter, and the day of entertainment he had ordered for his respected friends, Belford wrote him, that, at the same time that his heart beat with joy on receiving such delightful accounts of his situation from his own hand, he gave him his assurance, that both himself and Aurelia would, perhaps, in less than three months, if heaven permitted, embrace him at Leghorn: meantime, he requested that their correspondence, until that time, should be frequent.

The day of festivity arrived. The Marquis of Solerno, the Counts of Castallianco, Princisco, Pignatelli, with a few more select persons of the first fashion, or of high worth, with their ladies and families, dined with Belford, at Devent's Grand Hotel. It is a news-paper-like thing, to detail a repast, be it ever so sumptuous. An epi-

eure may descend to every particular :—a gentleman may be able to do so, but he cannot disgrace himself by the meanness and unmanliness of the enumeration. Suffice it to say, that the entertainment was splendid, served up in the highest taste, and conducted with all that elegance and order which might be expected from one of the first gentlemen of fortune in England. It was pleasant to observe the different, yet not contrasted manner of the party.—The gravity or reserve of the master of the feast, Aurelia, and young Altamont, was much relaxed by that charming vivacity, mingled with elegance and fine breeding, which characterize the first ranks in Italy. As the strangers could speak the language of Rome with facility, (Altamont excepted, who yet understood all that passed in conversation) this circumstance contributed infinitely to increase the joys of the day. All was regulated by that decorum and urbanity which distinguish, at this time, in most nations of Europe, the higher circles from those of inferior rank. At Belford's table, decorum and urbanity were the effect, however, not of a high and polished education

only ; they were the result of principle :— for it was this worthy man's care, wherever he travelled, or should travel, to become acquainted only with those individuals and families who rise above the crowd, and who dare to be singularly virtuous and exemplary in manners.—His own natural dispositions led him to make this selection. But he had an additional motive for this caution. It arose from his attention to her who was the last remaining pledge of pious and most tender love, and hope of once too happy union :—Not that Aurelia stood in need of any additional example of goodness, but her father wisely considered, that the more frequently and the more uniformly young minds are accustomed to behold the amiable and respectable qualities of our nature displayed in the characters of those with whom they converse, they themselves become gradually more virtuous and accomplished.

The Italians were charmed with the manners of Aurelia and of Lord Altamont ; for this young man made one of all Belford's

parties.—They were both conspicuous for that “modesty which ever sits so becoming on youth.” The young lady spoke Italian, as we have already mentioned, with ease and elegance, (making just allowance for a foreign accent,) and conveyed a very high idea of her superior capacity and excellent dispositions by the sentiments which she expressed. Altamont laboured under some difficulty from a want of fluency in expressing himself in the language of the country; besides, he was naturally of a reflecting cast, often did he tenderly muse on the beloved face of his Aurelia, when he could do it unnoticed. His silence was eloquent:—for silence is often eloquent. He listened with the countenance of placidity, and with the attentive and elegant manner of a well-bred gentleman, to all that passed, and especially to the remarks or short relations of any lively story from the ladies:—He had his reward;—for, during his stay at home, he experienced the highest degree of kindness and hospitality from all the families who were present.

After a few hours spent at dinner and coffee, and in the pleasant communication of mutual sentiment, the company took an airing. They were engaged by Belford, when he first requested the honour of their presence at his hotel, to return in the evening, and partake of a musical repast. He had been at pains to engage some of the best performers in Rome to attend his guests;—and, at an hour not very late, the party re-assembled, and found an orchestra elegantly fitted up in a very splendid room, and above thirty vocal and instrumental Italians and Germans ready to entertain them with Orphean strains:—For what music on the globe can compare with that of Rome? The words being pronounced by the vocal performer with all the pathos of sensibility, and pronounced clearly and fully too, produced a fascinating influence on every musical ear.

After a concert which lasted four hours, and one of the most perfect in execution which this great city could produce, the company were conducted to another superb apartment, where a light, elegant collation

was prepared for them. As every lady and gentleman present observed the laws of temperance and moderation in all their pleasures and scenes of festivity,—so, of course, very late hours were their utter aversion. By 11 o'clock they broke up, superiorly happy on reflecting on the rational joys of the day. As they were just about to depart, and the Countess of Castel Bianco observing it was not yet late, the Prince de Pignatelli gently addressed her, by remarking that 11 o'clock was a late hour at Rome;—and that no person in that city was more exemplary than the Countess, in order and regularity of every kind:—that he well knew, from his own present feelings, that it was an effort to leave such pleasant society; but as the example of persons of their order was of moral importance to society, he hoped and entreated that the liberty he had taken would be forgiven.

The Countess bowed assent;—and, in a very polite return, thanked him for his observations and his candour.

The day after Belford gave the entertainment to a small party so well entitled to his best attention, he received a letter from his brother Charles, which afforded him the highest satisfaction. In this letter, he mentions the exertions he had lately made to settle his affairs at Leghorn, in a shorter period than he had formerly intimated to him:—he would now, by the continuance of those exertions, be ready to sail for Britain three or four weeks sooner than he formerly imagined he could effect this object:—that the circumstance which had produced this agreeable change, was the arrivals, from very distant parts, of several richly laden merchantmen, much sooner than was expected. Charles assured his brother, that, in four weeks at farthest, he should be fully prepared to receive him; and, after spending a few days in so noble a city as Leghorn, he should find a vessel perfectly to his mind, and to the taste of his niece, ready to sail from thence.

As our travellers were incapable of any species of dissipation, of course they spent their time at Rome in a most agreeable

manner. The infinite variety of monuments of ancient Roman grandeur,—the many magnificent modern palaces,—above all, the stupendous cathedral of St Peter,—the places of public entertainment,—and the daily society of their select friends,—enabled them to pass their time with more advantages than mere amusement.

But Belford and his accomplished daughter carried their observations much farther than our ordinary itinerants; and they displayed a spirit superior to those vulgar prejudices, which in every country flow from the sources of a weak understanding, or a narrow and bigotted education. They assembled every Sunday, and sometimes on other days, with their fellow-christians, to pay homage to their Creator: They perceived external forms and ceremonies to which they had not been accustomed in their own country, and they perceived these rites with the spirit of rational toleration. Perhaps they secretly lamented that so much superstition should be mingled with devotion: Yet both Belford and Aurelia have often declared, with visible emotions

of joy, descriptive of the charity of their heart, that they have often, at Rome, and in other parts both of Italy and France, beheld, with the highest satisfaction, such symptoms of genuine manly devotion, as might put to shame many of high profession among those who call themselves the Reformed Church. They frequently saw priests of various ranks, from the highest of the Hierarchy to a humble curate, perform the sacred offices of religion with every degree of becoming gravity and apparent sincerity, and heard them pronounce discourses, as sound in doctrine, and as pure in morality, as ever were delivered by any priest or presbyter of Britain.

No gentleman should presume to say, he had made the grand tour, in order to see the world, and to improve his mind, unless he is conscious that he either has most assiduously made previous preparation for travelling, by a proper acquaintance with classical learning; or has been attended by an enlightened tutor, who, in some degree, might, by his assistance and instructions, compensate to him what he wanted in ne-

cessary knowledge. To travel into foreign countries, at this day, without some fund of ancient and modern learning, more especially without the knowledge of the history of Europe; and more particularly still, without a tolerable knowledge of the history of his own country, reflects just disgrace on any young man of birth or affluence, who had opportunities of acquiring knowledge before he went abroad. But, alas! so it has been, so it is, and so it will be, till other methods are adopted at home, and at the Universities, with young men of rank or of wealth: The wisest and most virtuous part of mankind cordially agree, that this method must be more strict than domestic and academical discipline. For want of attention to these most interesting objects, both learning and morals are deeply affected.

Belford began now to prepare for his journey to Leghorn:—He and Aurelia employed some days in taking leave of the families who had paid them so many polite attentions, and even shewed them instances of the most genuine hospitality:—And in this business Belford was not actuated by

the vulgar and dishonourable idea of too many unfeeling strangers or travellers in every country, namely, that taking leave, even after receiving the highest favours, is a matter of mere good-breeding or ceremony, where the heart has no concern. No:—The sentiments of this amiable man were far more exalted. There was not a plebeian idea durst enter his honourable mind. He was fair, candid, and honest, in all his professions, and in all his actions. He bid his friends farewell with gratitude and affection, wishing them all those blessings to which superior virtue and merit are ever entitled. The lovely Aurelia joined cordially in the same sentiments and wishes.

A tender and delicate scene now opened, which was to put to the test the nicest sensibilities of this lovely young woman.

Altamont informed Mr Belford, on the morning before he was to set out for Leghorn, that having given his honour to his former guardians and professors at Oxford, that he would visit Switzerland, before his return to England, he could not think of

remaining at Rome after the departure of such endearing society : That it was his most earnest and anxious wish to have the permission to accompany Belford and his daughter from the place of their present residence to Britain ; but that so sacred he had held, and he trusted he ever should hold, his honour, that he was resolved to spend a few weeks in visiting Geneva, and the several Cantons of that singular country.

While Altamont thus addressed himself to his ever revered friend, he could not conceal the internal emotions which agitated his whole frame : For, in fact, he was now engaged in a very serious warfare ; no less than whether love or honour should prevail.

Heaven strengthened the native virtue of his soul : he was enabled to preserve his honour, without forsaking his love. He formed a bold resolution. With equal manliness he put his purpose in execution. He requested Belford to favour him with a private audience.—Assent, of course, was

given; and they retired to Belford's apartments.

Shortly after they entered the room, Altamont, with dignified composure, and with the most profound respectfulness, opened his heart to his friend, as to a parent: He frankly acknowledged he had, from esteem and love, and by every tender attention, endeavoured to gain his daughter's affections:—that he had been careful that every part of his conduct, since they became acquainted, should be not only unexceptionable, but should be markedly attentive to the young lady. “Forgive me, Sir, (he added) when I presume to say, that I have, for some time past, flattered myself with the fond hopes that I am not quite indifferent to the beloved Aurelia. To her I have never uttered one expression on the subject on which I have now entered with you. If my eyes have spoken the passion of my soul, for this I am not accountable. I know the value, the justly inestimable value you put upon the adorable treasure; and that mere rank and fortune are objects, in your sight, comparatively contemptible, with

qualities of a very different nature. The former, I venture not even to mention. In my own mind, I assign them no other rank than things adventitious deserve : but if, to these accidental circumstances, I have been so fortunate as, in your opinion, to show forth the indication of any superior endowments, and of those dispositions which bear even but a remote resemblance to your own, suffer me to entertain some hopes of your countenance, when I approach the lovely Aurelia, to throw myself at her feet."

Belford heard the modest declaration of Altamont, with every degree of polite attention : and though he was uniformly under the guidance of the laws of caution and prudence, he resolved at once, like a man of honour, as well as an affectionate parent, not to keep the mind of this amiable young man in suspense.—In few and simple words, he thus replied :

" The expressions of esteem and affection for my daughter, and for the sentiments which you have now made, do you the greatest honour. I frankly tell you, for a

considerable time past, I have entertained a very strong partiality for your belevolent character and dispositions.—I will also be free enough to inform you, that, remarking very early your attachment to my beloved daughter, I wrote to a faithful friend in England, who is well informed of the respectability of your family and their connections, and who could give me the most perfect account as to your own exalted character. It is with heart-felt joy that I assure you, the result of my anxious enquiries have been not more to my satisfaction, than to your honour. Delicacy, and my contempt of what wears the most remote appearance of adulation, forbid me to enlarge on this topic. When I say, that your worth, in my mind, adorns your rank, I have only to add, that you have my most cordial consent to pay your addresses immediately to my dearest Aurelia :—And, if you have already secretly won her heart, you shall both receive a father's blessing."

As those superior spirits, who are ever alive to sweet sensibilities, are struck with ecstasy, on beholding, in the mirror of fan-

cy, the countenance of Palemon, when he first saw the lovely Lavinia, gathering, "spike after spike, her sparing morsel :"—so here, an imagination of no very fertile nature, may figure the brightened features of Altamont,—who, almost persuaded, from signs that lovers only know, that he enjoyed no ordinary degree of favour with Aurelia, and transported by her father's elegant and manly consent to his addresses, could scarce utter one word in return. His soul was overwhelmed. The same feeling of gratitude which Palemon experienced on viewing "Acator's dear remains," that noblest of virtues inspired Altamont's heart with the most exalted sensations of the same kind :—He fell down at Belford's feet :—He kissed his hand,—and poured forth the prayer of reverence and affection for him who was soon to bestow on him superior honours.

Cupid has always been painted, in the purity of taste, with wings :—On these Altamont flew to his beloved.—But, recollecting himself for a short while, before he approached her sacred presence, delica-

cy, modesty, and every grace and virtue were the ornaments of her character,—he determined to collect all his force of mind, and, from respect to his fair one's dignity, as well as to his own, to address her in strains different far from the mad, intemperate jargon of modern lovers.

We attempt not to describe the first meeting of this delightful pair, after Altamont had parted with Belford. Fancy may,—fancy must paint here.—And they who cannot figure what passed, when this excellent young man opened his soul to Aurelia,—have neither soul nor heart.

He addressed her like a man, and like a lover.—The most ardent affection was regulated, in expression, by good sense and reason. Aurelia, animated by the noble principles of honour and truth, after a moment's hesitation, began with a voice that would have allayed the most savage breast, and charmed the wildest discord, into calm attention;—every accent breathed the soft emotions of her spotless mind:—Her words were befitting a divinity:—She, with a fal-

tering voice, acknowledged that she had long esteemed him, (at the word esteem, Altamont turned pale,) and that esteem was still heightened, if possible, by the very high estimation in which he stood with her ever revered father. Seeing Altamont in some agitation and distress, she endeavoured, with much confusion, to explain her truly delicate and refined sentiments more to his comfort and satisfaction; therefore, soaring above silly affectation and dissimulation, she frankly made known to him her unbounded love and affection:—To describe the transports of the happy Altamont would be impossible:—Oh, too lovely woman! he exclaimed, am I then to be blest with the most perfect of human beings!—to be—to be—I am distracted with pleasure:—Oh love! thou pleasing painful torment, is it possible for me to enjoy my present felicity!—A thousand times blessed be the heavenly power that has made me thus happy:—What language can paint the emotions of my soul!—Here he flew to embrace the idol of his affection, and again exclaimed,—am I then to be made a thousand times more than happy, by the

possession of the hand and heart of the most beloved of her sex. Aurelia, with the most heavenly and bewitching sweetness, blushed consent.

Thus did this happy couple, with the full consent of Belford, bring to a happy issue the great object of both their wishes, without foolish precipitancy, or those tedious delays occasioned by sordid and interested views of settlements, jointures, pin-money, &c. No :—The parties placed confidence, and they had every reason to place unbounded confidence in each others integrity and worth :—hence it was resolved, on both sides, to reserve all that unpleasant, (though necessary) business, till they should meet at Munster Abbey.

After these interviews, it was resolved that our travellers should proceed directly for Leghorn and Switzerland. Altamont discovered all the symptoms of the fondest affection at parting with her who was now his bride in the sight of heaven :—He vowed, and vowed again, everlasting fidelity,—but such vows were not requisite from such

a soul:—He assured his dearest friends, that, if it pleased God, he should, by the expiration of two months, pay his devoirs at Munster Abbey, being determined to make no unnecessary delays in passing through the different places which it was resolved he should visit.





MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. V.

NEXT morning, by six o'clock, each party set out on their respective journey. We leave for a time the British Peer, and accompany Belford and his Aurelia to Leghorn.

In a few days they arrived at this noble city, vying with the metropolis in gaiety of every kind, and far, far exceeding it in commerce and wealth.

We may conclude that Charles was waiting, at the lodgings he had provided for his brother, with a variety of emotions, affection mingled with shame, and gratitude with the highest esteem. But it had been previously fixed on, by the delicacy and

good sense of Belford, that when he and his brother should meet, not one word should be uttered, not one reference made to whatever had been, but all buried in everlasting oblivion.

The meeting was such as might be expected between brothers of such excellent hearts;—and their tender and interesting interview was not a little affected by the presence of Aurelia, who, on this occasion, acted no indifferent part. She embraced her uncle with that filial (we may justly call it) affection, and unaffected ardour, which afforded the most unequivocal evidence of her native goodness.

Ere we enter on the pleasures, the entertainments, or the amusements at Leghorn, it may be useful and instructive to that great proportion of mortals, who neither do think, nor can think for themselves, to look back a little, and revolve in their understandings, (such as they are) the resolution which wisdom and delicacy dictated to Belford, respecting the mode of meeting his brother Charles. We have just said,

that it had been fixed on as a settled point, by this good man, that not one word should be uttered, not one reference made to whatever had been, when they should meet, but all buried in everlasting oblivion. This resolution, on the part of all men of good sense, who have either had the misfortune of being put to shame by relations; or who have unhappily fallen into quarrels, coldness, or absence of intercourse with friends, or even acquaintance; this resolution, we say, is founded on this wise axiom, namely, That mutual explanations, or accusations, respecting disagreeable circumstances, instantaneously tend to irritate:—The first effect of this irritation, is to call forth some species of defence:—The second, is to retort:—and the third is, to make the breach wider than ever. The manner, therefore, truly wise, is that which Belford adopted, and ought to be a model to all persons placed in similar situations.—We say, similar situations: for there are some singular exceptions to this general rule. There are cases of so trying a nature, as put even religion to the severest test; and here, we do affirm, their laws per-

mit, nay, command us to shun all future intercourse with persons who are capable of wounding the feelings of another,—by writing torrents of abuse, or by using severe language, and the most bitter reflections,—even though true. To the honour of birth, education, and of principle, there is no instance of a man born a gentleman, or who has been taught his duty by elegant, well-bred, and well-informed parents, who was ever capable of forgetting the language of a gentleman; much less of such expressions committed to paper:—the low-born, ill-tutored, neglected, unprincipled of mankind; they *only* fall into this detestable practice. But to return from this moral digression.

Charles, as soon as his brother and niece had taken some refreshments, begged leave to have the request of his worthy partner indulged; which was to have permission to pay his respects to Mr and Miss Belford, immediately on their arrival at Leghorn.—The hospitable and polite offer was received with gratitude. Charles returned to Mr le Fevre, and conducted him directly to his brother's

hotel. The countenance and manners of their new friend were visibly pleasing to the strangers, and they were a just index of his heart and dispositions. It was noon, when Belford arrived in town : M. le Fevre, therefore, requested the honour of Belford and Aurelia's company to dinner, at what hour would be most agreeable to them. Charles fixed the time ; and he conducted his brother and niece there at the hour appointed for their entertainment.

It filled Belford's heart with inexpressible pleasure and satisfaction, to see his brother the companion and the favourite of this excellent man ; nor did it lessen his agreeable feelings that he was enjoying the comforts and elegancies of life, not only as a partner, but as a brother, with le Fevre. The wealth which flowed in upon this great mercantile house, was the effect of industry and of honourable transactions : And this wealth displayed itself in part, on his table,—yet without profusion or ostentation. The entertainment was elegant. He had notice from Charles of the day when his brother

should arrive,—nay, that he should be in Leghorn by eleven in the morning, and had therefore, not only made an additional course, but had also invited some of the first company in town to be of the party.

Le Fevre could, but had not the folly or vanity to produce all the first wines of the Continent. But, at this table, as in most foreign nations of the southerly part of Europe, intemperate drinking, to their honour, is unknown. The pleasures of the table were enjoyed with moderation and with elegant festivity. The repast did not occupy much time, for it was proposed by Charles to go to a very celebrated Opera, where, that evening, a new performer from Pisa was to make her first appearance.

After having coffee, the whole party set out, and were feasted in proportion to the delicacy and sensibility of their musical organs. Madame Cori sung with enchanting taste, and was received with repeated bursts of applause. Indeed, the whole entertainment was conducted in a manner worthy

of so noble a city as Leghorn : They spared no expence to procure the best performers from every quarter of Italy, and from Germany.

It had been agreed on, before the party set off, to return to M. le Fevre's to supper, which was a cold collation of all that was rare, and in season. The company remained only two hours; yet, during that short time, the hospitable landlord had the address to introduce a variety of topics equally informing as entertaining. In a particular manner, with great candour he enlarged on the superior style of music in Italy, to all nations of the world, adding, that his own native country was not only far inferior in that respect, but also affirmed that the French, like the English, have no marked national music of intrinsic merit or originality.

As Belford had expressed at dinner a desire to see every thing in Leghorn which deserved the attention of a traveller, one of the gentlemen present, and an intimate friend of le Fevre's, politely offered his services, and requested to know at what hour

next morning he should do himself the honour to call on him at the hotel. Twelve o'clock was agreed on. The object of first importance which demands the attention of a benevolent and public spirited traveller, is the harbour, the ware-houses, and shipping, of this illustrious place. Leghorn carries on a trade far superior to any city on the Mediterranean, and displays striking proofs of that affluence and fullness which commerce never fails to produce, when the Government is of that mild nature which this part of Italy has for a considerable time experienced. The next source of pleasure which opened to their view, was the elegance and splendor of several of the public buildings. After a few hours spent in this rational entertainment, Lavanti, their conductor, proposed to introduce Mr Belford to some of the principal English merchants who resided in town. This proposal was attentive and polite ; but as our traveller had no personal acquaintance with these gentlemen ; as his stay at Leghorn was only to be short ; and as his great object in every part of his tour was to know the customs, the manners, the religion, and laws of the

countries through which he passed, as far as his time would permit, he declined for these reasons, any introduction to his countrymen on this occasion. He was impatient to proceed to England ;—and naturally concluded, that if he was to become acquainted with so respectable a body of men as the gentlemen of the Merchant's Company at Leghorn, he should be obliged to prolong his stay beyond the time which he had fixed for his departure. A few days more, however, were devoted to visit different parts of the city and adjacent country ;—and the hospitality and politeness of attention he experienced, were surpassed only by the elegant and instructive communications he received from the select foreigners with which Mr le Fevre and Charles had made him acquainted :—And the pleasure the Italians enjoyed in Belford and his daughter's society, was wonderfully heightened by the facility with which they spoke the language of the country.

The day of departure was now fixed.—The intervening days were spent in the

painful duty of taking leave of their generous benefactors.

It cannot be imagined, that Aurelia and her beloved Altamont parted without the most endearing expressions of mutual invariable attachment,—and with promises of as regular correspondence as possible, till the period of their separation should expire. Accordingly, the day before Belford left Leghorn, Aurelia received a letter from her beloved, dated from Berne in Switzerland, giving her the pleasant intelligence, that he had as agreeable and pleasant a journey as he could expect, apart from the idol of his heart ;—that he was in perfect health,—and well received by all to whom he had letters of introduction. He had seen Geneva, and gave a beautiful description of that romantic city, adorned by every object in nature to render it delightful, especially by the lake in its close vicinity. As Aurelia was educated with singular attention by the best of parents, she was of course acquainted intimately with the geography of Europe, and, indeed, of all the globe. She relished

therefore a minute account of this celebrated city,—but could not help lamenting to her father, that spirit of folly and absurdity which Altamont took notice of in the close of his epistle, which marked the political sentiments of the Genoese,—democratic, to a degree inconsistent with that subordination which is the very bond and cement of society :—Hence, he observed, the insolence of mechanics and the rabble,—who all erected themselves judges in matters of state ; while every man of wisdom and of modesty knows, that there is not one of a thousand in any, even the freest state in Europe, who is entitled to converse on the subject either of political or religious government. Altamont sagaciously remarked, that politics is a science, and a profound science,—which the ignorant or the half-learned should not presume to give their sentiments on,—much less dare to violate the public order by attempting to take a share in administration.

Aurelia was requested to address her next letter to him to Lausanne, where he proposed

to spend three weeks. She instantly wrote him, expressive of the tender sentiments of her unalterable esteem. In all the beauty of female delicacy, she bids him hasten his return to his native land, as much as was consistent with fulfilling the plan of his travels,—giving him, at the same time, the most perfect assurance, that his idea was engraven on her heart in indelible characters, and that her ambition was, and ever should be, to improve herself in those valuable qualities, as well as elegant accomplishments, which alone can render man or woman truly noble.

The assiduity and attention of Charles procured not only an excellent vessel for Belford's family and suit, but every kind of comfortable stores, to provide against the accident of a long voyage.—It was fortunate that he was so provident;—for, by contrary winds, they were at sea some weeks longer than they expected.

There was, however, no stormy or tempestuous weather ;—the vessel was well

manned,—and the party was agreeably increased by Mr Belford's permitting two English gentlemen, who had been at Venice, to sail with him and his friends. —This accession gave more variety to their conversation, and to their amusements, especially as both the gentlemen evidently appeared to have received a liberal education :—a circumstance which, with a very few more qualities, (prudence, temperance, industry, and good temper,) will ever carry a man through the world, with credit to himself, and with satisfaction to his friends and acquaintance.

One of the gentleman was of a remarkable grave turn, or rather wore, in his countenance, the traces of sorrow or disappointment. Belford, wishing to render their passage as pleasant as possible, endeavoured, with all his address, to preserve his party in the best spirits ; and, in a day or two after they set sail from Leghorn,—he told the strangers, with his native openness of manner, his name, and place of residence in England,—the melancholy cause of his

journey to the continent, and the heavy loss he had sustained :—He introduced them to Aurelia and Charles, and expressed his benevolent wishes that their society might be mutually happy while they sailed. Belford was now entitled to take the liberty of requesting to know the names of the gentlemen who did him the honour to accompany him. The eldest replied for himself and his friend, “ My name, sir, is Piercy. I am a native of Northumberland, and have been at Venice, to recover the property of a brother who died there about twelve months ago. The name of this gentleman, my cousin, who was so obliging as to attend me on my journey, is Meredith, and was born in Shropshire.”

The party had now such general knowledge of each other, as rendered their intercourse more easy than it possibly could have been without these mutual communications. Indeed, they perfectly possessed that noble openness of soul which characterizes a native Englishman above every

nation on earth. Frankness, and unsuspectingness, appear in all their manners, with the exceptions of some individuals in high, and in commercial life, who have permitted their souls to be tarnished by cunning and dark reserve.

On the morning of the fourth day after leaving Leghorn, Aurelia observed to her father, that she could not help noticing a certain kind of oppression hanging on the countenance of Mr Piercy ; and that, though his good-breeding led him to make every exertion to preserve his spirits in proper tone for company, yet it was obvious that this was a severe constraint on his internal feelings. Belford agreed with his daughter, that there certainly was something resting heavily on Piercy's spirits, adding, that he would endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to raise them, by exhilarating conversation, and amusing histories or tales. Meantime, it farther occurred to this worthy man, that, as nothing tends more to alleviate inward woe, over which the unfortunate or the distressed are ever

disposed to brood, than to have a proper opportunity of pouring forth their heart to the benevolent and compassionate, it might therefore relieve his mind to give a relation of his story or his affliction ; and that he would first try this expedient, the former would follow naturally with more effect.

In the afternoon of the same day, therefore, Belford, with the address of a gentleman, entreated Mr Piercy “ to forgive him for presuming to ask a question, concerning the solution of which he could say, from his heart, he was anxious from the most disinterested motives.” Piercy made him welcome to put what question he pleased, assuring him that he would answer him to his satisfaction, if in his power.

“ If then,” said Belford, “ there is any affliction or misfortune oppressing your mind, of such a nature as may, without wounding your feelings, be imparted to the present company, pardon me for indulging the opinion, that a communication of it to

sympathizing spirits, would not fail to diminish, in part, that load which evidently bears you down." Piercy thanked him, and replied with composure : " My tale, Sir, is no secret in my own country ; it is, too, the tale both of distress and misfortune, and you and the company shall immediately become acquainted with it, if you have patience to attend." He then proceeded in the narrative.

It seems as if I had been doomed the child of sorrow from my earliest hour ;—for in a space little more considerable than that above mentioned, my tender mother fell a victim to my introduction to life :—Langour and faintness succeeded excruciating pain,—her fleeting spirit vanished, and left a world in which she had passed but few years, though these few were numbered by her sufferings !—Unfortunate in wedlock,—delicate in health,—a martyr to feeling and sensibility, she had few objects of attraction left behind her. Alas ! I was the only one which might have been dear to her, and I cost her her existence. My infantine years (uninteresting to all who are not connect-

ed by consanguinity) seemed wholly unimportant to my father. I shall pass them over : The only trait which seemed prominent in my mind, was a pensive, indescribable regret for my dear departed parent : My fancy pictured her in almost every circumstance of life :—I felt her loss deeply,—fain would my towering spirit have flown to those regions of peace, which she, no doubt, inhabits, to enjoy her embrace,—to lay my weary head on her maternal bosom, and to deposit there every secret of my heart, had not religion checked this presumptuous wish, and made me feel, that if I thus longed to see that parent I had never known, but who, from an involuntary irresistible impulse, was so much the object of my love,—what must my adoration be,—what my desire to behold that eternal benignant Parent, known to us by his mercies, and his preserving grace, in every occurrence of life, and admirably provident in all the arrangements of the Creation? My father (peace to his shade) was just the reverse of what I am told my mother was :—Unfeeling, formed of cold clay, and made up in a course athletic form, he was a perfect sen-

sualist :—his horses, and his hounds, the scrupulous study of every thing that could invigorate and preserve a wordly existence, these were his only cares :—Shortly after my mother's decease, he married a beautiful interested young woman, by whom he (though at an advanced age) had a numerous family.

He entirely neglected me, and left me to mine own free agency, till, by degrees, he began to dislike me : My step-mother incessantly armed him against me, having always regarded me as an intruder in *her* family, and an unsuccessful candidate for those affections, the alienating of which from her family, she would have deemed an unpardonable usurpation. I was, in a manner, an orphan, though not fatherless. To please all parties by my absence, and to employ my mind, I entered the army, in which my father expected me to live on my pay, in order to dispose of his ample fortune in favour of his children of the second marriage. I took my leave of him at Brussels, where he and family were on a party of pleasure : and, when I was a dependant in his house,

and watched on every side for three months, my nature was analysed, and my conduct scrutinized daily, to find out some particle of guilt, which might have entirely thrown me from my father's heart, (if there I had ever dwelt). Always of saturnine habits, I courted solitude, loved books, contemplative scenes, affecting topics, and indulged gloomy ideas.—From this languor of the mind, the beauty of Camilla de Clerey roused me :—Graceful in her appearance, and accomplished beyond the power of description,—I loved her with a phrenzy I now blush to own. I was born to love,—to love to madness.—I could do nothing tepidly :—At this period my every power was absorbed, my every happiness concentrated in one object :—those charms she really did not possess, my fabling fancy lent her.—Love decked her mind and body, and my romantic brain made her an angel.—She was to me, wife, mother, sister, mistress, friend ! Camilla, of an attractive person, young, warm, and passionate, certainly loved me, but it was such a love I hate to recollect it ;—it was a sensual, a transitory love, —a love of vanity :—to be brief,—we were

married privately by an English chaplain, and were obliged to conceal our marriage, for she was the daughter of a ruined, avaricious nobleman, who meant to repair his finances at the risk of her connubial happiness ; and I, though once heir to an immense fortune, was only heir at will, it being acquired ; and well I know that this imprudent step would forfeit every title I might have had to my father's countenance and support.

Concealment heightened every enjoyment, as sable night sets off the starry orbits ; or a black ground shews forth the sparkling diamond. Stolen hours of bliss,—nocturnal rambles,—moon-light appointments,—anxious absence,—ten thousand devices to see my beloved, occupied my whole time, and made life appear too short a period for love. At last the fatal order to join my regiment in America announced to me a speedy and heart breaking parting ! —When I left my wife, I was in a situation little short of madness ; for our union seemed to me rather the connecting of souls than the common linking of properties and

persons. Judge, then, dear gentlemen, (a tear stole from his eye) judge, I say, my feelings on my return,—to find Camilla had set aside our marriage, which was accounted invalid, and had united herself to a nabob, for the love of gold. My father died, and, having disinherited me, and I forced to sell my company to pay a few trifling debts of my own, and to defray the expences of having incumbered myself to assist a brother-officer. The only friend I had in the regiment, to whom I had confided every thought, was killed by my side in the first campaign ; and I returned to my native land, merely to find false friends,—rejecting acquaintances,—and departed school-fellows,—and to see how differently Mr Piercy, heir to an estate,—and Mr Piercy, ruined and disinherited, was received in the world. For a long time I was a complete man-hater, and the veriest wretch on earth ;—at length, however, religion and philosophy cured me, and I assumed a tranquil gaiety ; and am determined, through the thorny journey of life, to pluck every flower which Providence may place on the road-side. I have inhabited different parts

of Italy for many years, on account of the cheapness of the country, which enabled me, on the smallest pittance allowed me by a distant relation, to support myself as a gentleman. Heaven never deserts the resigned, and those who humbly hope.

My cousin Mr Meredith, who accompanied me on my journey from England, has been my constant companion, and I have found the greatest assistance from his benevolence. I am now independent, and I trust shall never prove ungrateful :—We were last at Venice together for the purposes I have already had the honour to mention to you, and the circumstances of which are singular enough. My youngest step-brother, in spite of the antipathy of his mother, and the hard usage of my father, had ever shewn the warmest affection for me, and marked my melancholy with regret from his earliest years. Indeed I was kind to him, and, in many instances of life, both by advice, and what pecuniary aid was in my feeble power, I was a second father to him. We always corresponded, and he preferred me to all his other bro-

thers and sisters. Seeing my father's injustice during his life, he resolved at his own death to make up for it, and has left me not only his portion of my father's fortune, but also much property acquired in this country.

Opulent I therefore again may be,—but *happy* never. Wrecked in my first adventure for felicity,—deprived by infidelity of the once dear partner of my heart,—forced to despise one I can never tear from my perverse affections, I must be a wealthy pilgrim in a land of sorrows;—but patience shall be my portion,—and, when my journey's done, I shall trust all to that supreme Being, who, though he checkers life with adversity, makes up the balance of happiness deficient here below, in a world to come.

“Gentlemen, I have done;—and have to request your forgiveness for the relation I have made, which, I trust, however, will not be wholly uninteresting, as it presents some instructive lessons in passing through life.”

The company, though much entertained by Piercy's interesting story, were, at the same time, exhausted by the length of it. The hour of dinner approached,—their spirits were revived by good cheer, and easy, elegant conversation. Meredith was a pleasant, good-humoured young fellow, who, from pure friendship, had accompanied Piercy in his journey to Italy. He told the party, that he had no story to succeed his friend Piercy's, as hitherto his life had been all sun-shine. Yet, adds he, I expect to share, like others, a portion of these ills to which all mankind are exposed. My friend's history, I think, will guard me against one rock on which so many ill-fated mortals split, which is never to be precipitate in any one important step to be taken in life.

After dinner, Meredith observed the company still somewhat grave, and therefore proposed to give them a specimen of his musical talents:—He sung well,—like a gentleman;—but he was no superlative adept. He requested lovely Aurelia, (whose name we long to mention) to do him the

honour to name a song, which, if he could sing it, he would be happy to perform to the best of his power. Aurelia, who was distinguished by propriety and good judgment in every part of her conduct and manners, observed that, in her opinion, the best song which could be sung at present, would be one which called to their mind with warmth their dear native lands ; and that it would, she was persuaded, be highly grateful to the company, if Mr Meredith would favour them with " Britannia rule the waves." He sung this air in true style, to the great satisfaction and exhilaration of his audience. After a little interval, he entertained them with a few more airs of the gay and light kind, but all of them expressive of some benevolent and virtuous sentiment. None of the other gentlemen possessed the powers from nature of performing vocally. And delicacy forbade addressing Aurelia to bear her part for obvious reasons. During the remainder of the voyage, Meredith was the joy of the party, for, besides his musical taste, he possessed the agreeable qualities of wit and humour, which when regulated by good sense and good temper, (as they were

in him) are always fascinating to any society who are not Cynics.

Our travellers now approached the shore of that country which is the glory of all the earth. They landed at Plymouth in perfect health and good spirits, though somewhat fatigued by the length of the voyage, and by tossings from contrary winds. It was therefore resolved to spend two days at this place, chiefly on dear Aurelia's account, who, though in good health, yet wished for some rest and relaxation at land. The shipping, the harbour, and fortifications, afforded them amusement during their short stay here,—for the town does not deserve to be mentioned, either on account of beauty or elegance.

This excellent party must now be separated, never to meet again in these sublunary regions. The parting was interesting. Mutual good wishes were expressed with unfeigned sincerity. Piercy and Meredith were obliged to return by the way of Portsmouth, on account of business of importance; and Belford, Charles, and Aurelia,

set off directly for their own terrestrial paradise. When he landed at Plymouth, Belford immediately wrote to his steward, intimating his arrival in England, and that in six days from the date of his letter, he proposed being at Munster Abbey.





MUNSTER ABBEY.

CHAP. VI.

AT the time appointed, the long absent travellers arrived. It was rather at a late hour,—and by intention,—that the villagers might not be thrown into any bustle, by running out from their houses to pay their heart-felt respects to the adored lord of the manor. Indeed, Belford had expressly charged his steward not to mention any thing of the letter he had received from Plymouth, to any but one or two of the servants of the family, who had been ordered several weeks before to have every thing in perfect order, and to receive the family at whatever time they should arrive.

It was a transporting, a celestial omen to lovely Aurelia, to find, the moment she entered her own apartment, a letter from

her beloved Altamont : She opened it with that delicate, that exquisite sensibility of soul, which a being of an ordinary nature can form no idea of. Salutations of love were impressed on every word of the epistle, and she lifted her eyes to heaven, adoring that goodness which had preserved in perfect health the treasure of her soul, and which opened to her the prospect of beholding him not long hence at her father's mansion,

This letter from Altamont filled Belford and Charles with the most delightful emotions. Who can paint the sympathetic feelings of a benevolent and affectionate parent and uncle, with a child who is worthy of their most fervent affection, and who commands their esteem by filial piety and by exemplary goodness !

But we must not omit here a very interesting circumstance to every virtuous and benignant soul, which is, the ecstasy of transport which every servant of the family discovered on the arrival of their master and his dearest child, after so long an ab-

sence. And the scene was rendered still more interesting by those mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, which nature called into collision, on recollecting the loss of their ever-beloved and valuable mistress. Belford and Aurelia received them all in the kindest and most gracious manner; and, with that condescendence which elevates and adorns our nature more than all the bauble of titles, and the splendour of wealth, enquired after their health, and the health of the wives and children of those who had families. Thus they laid down their heads on the pillows of sleep with that consciousness of virtue, and with that rational sense of the divine beneficence, of which, alas! so many of the great and the wealthy in all ages, cannot, from their lamentable habits of dissipation, form even an idea. O ye infatuated beings of either sex, placed by heaven's command at the head of greater or lesser families! of what pleasures and joys do ye deprive your souls, by haughtiness, by tyranny and severity, to those partners of your kind, who, (but for some small accident, a few generations or a few years back) might have been placed in the

very same superior stations which you hold ! Ye want all principle,—and therefore ye can possess nothing that is valuable. Kind heaven, however, be praised, that among the great and the wealthy, *some* excellent spirits are ever to be found, who make it a point of conscience, to shew forth a spirit of kindness, mildness, and gentleness, to all their domestics,—to reward their faithful services,—to patronize their children in their views of raising themselves in the world. For the well-informed man, of the noblest blood, never forgets, that a few generations past, the founder of his family might have been some humble peasant, or some industrious artisan. Pride ever degrades high birth,—and *fools* of quality only are proud.

A transaction was now to take place at Munster Abbey, which puts to shame a very large portion of the human race. Belford was now to fulfil his promise to his beloved brother Charles. But as *delicacy* marked every part of his conduct when he conferred any favour, he was resolved to observe this *nice virtue* on the present oc-

casion, with the most *scrupulous attention*. The idea of laying his brother under an obligation was too gross for his pure and generous soul. He determined that the annual sum which he should settle on Charles should be held by him as an evidence of brotherly love, by the *acceptance* of it. Accordingly, the morning after his return from Italy, Belford proposed to Charles to walk in the garden for half an hour, resolving to execute his benevolent purpose in a moment; and, of course, without formal address, or the most distant reference to *what had been*. This good man had early this morning cast his eye on the state of his affairs, and found them in the most flourishing condition.—He saw himself possessed of a clear landed estate of twelve thousand pounds *per an.* and eighty thousand pounds in the funds.—In two sentences he imparted his whole scheme to his brother:—"My dear Charles, let me intreat you to add to that felicity which I already experience, by the goodness of heaven, in the temper and manners of my Aurelia, by complying with a request I am to prefer to you, with the utmost ardour of fraternal affection."—"My dearest

brother, (rejoined Charles) request, did you say?—your will is, and ought to be, and ever shall be, a command to me.—I also request to know what that will is.”

Belford flew to embrace him.—“ Charles, (says he) my fortune is overgrown :—it is far more than I was born ever to expect. I have found this morning, by glancing over my books, that I have a vast estate in land, unincumbered by a single shilling of debt, and a very considerable sum in the funds :—the former will be an ample fortune for my Aurelia ;—the latter I request you to share with me. Know, you will make me happy by your compliance.” And again he embraced him.

Charles was over-powered. He paused a few moments ; and then, in broken accents, and in a kind of a soliloquy, or fit of absence, exclaims,—“ Giver of all good, I here behold thy paternal hand. I feel, with extacy of gratitude, thy ineffable goodness to a prodigal child. I devote my future life, by thy aid, to temperance and to benevolence.—While I live I shall bless

thee." And, turning to Belford, with a look more expressive than a seraph could paint, he adds,—“ My brother ! my brother ! thou art more than man !—thou art an emanation of divinity !—My soul is overwhelmed by thy unparailelled benignity. I know thy exalted mind scorns all adulation and praise. I receive thy bounty with the warmest fraternal gratitude :—and I bless God and you.”

Here was a scene worthy of the recording Angel.—We see, “ Such things are,” in this world ; but, alas ! they rarely “ are.” The reasons are obvious. The very first lesson most children receive, is, to pay an implicit respect to rank and to riches, independently of the character and manners of the possessor. In the country especially, the reverence which the peasant is taught, almost from infancy, to pay the lord, knight, or squire of the manor, approaches to adoration :—not that we mean to insinuate here, in the most distant manner, that the great duty of respect for superiors should not be sacredly inculcated on the minds of all young persons :—we only complain of that indiscri-

minate respect which most parents, in the presence of their children, pay frequently to the most unworthy of mankind.

On the other hand, to teach the tender mind to look up with affection and regard only to the worthy and virtuous, has a most happy tendency, when the lesson is given with sound judgment, and with a good heart. Indeed, if any of these qualities are wanting, the lesson is not only lost, but perverted to the worst of ends. A parent of a weak understanding, and of a bad heart, is under the influence of mean prejudices, and very often of the lowest bigotry. Hence the child is taught, not rarely, contempt for superiors, and that insolence and audacity which is incompatible with the good order and peace of society. In a particular manner, if the parent is of the last description, he commonly endeavours to inspire his children with the utmost aversion from every superior or equal, who does not hold the same creed of superstition which infests his own plebeian mind ; and which he dares to call by the sacred name of religion.

The reverence which was paid to Belford by all around him, old, and young, was a tribute justly due to god-like qualities of mind and conduct. The parents who trained their children to pay him this reverence, acted a worthy part; and, by this species of culture, the peasant and the cottager taught their offspring one of the greatest duties of life.

A few days after Belford's arrival at his blessed mansion, his neighbours, of various ranks, came to pay him their compliments,—not in the ordinary manner, which generally signifies nothing. The intemperate only shunned his house. In the course of some days, these visits were all made. And now he resolved to lose no time in making the round of all his estates, accompanied by Aurelia, that he might have personal acquaintance with the circumstances and situations of all his farmers, peasants, and labourers. These dependents heard of his intended tour,—and they heard it with unfeigned joy,—for they knew it was their common parent who was to take a mild, a

benevolent, and liberal view of all their labours, and of all that concerned them.

The sober, the industrious, and the honest farmer, was the object of his particular attention. And indeed, he was blessed by having, almost to one, all his farmers of this description. If any of them had met with an unforeseen calamity, by the loss of any part of their substance, he remitted a certain portion of the rent, according to the specialty of the circumstances. If any had shewn a very superior degree of industry and of ingenuity, in improving his farm, and by raising superior crops to his neighbours, such a man was distinguished by him with some badge of honour, or some useful present. The less industrious he gently admonished, and expressed his hopes of their future activity.

But the poor labourers, the cottagers, were the objects of his most particular care. He considered them, as every man of sense and reflection does, as forming the strength and riches of every country on earth. He made a most minute enquiry into all their wants

and distresses, and especially since he took the last tour over his lands. With prudence, with humanity, with soft and winning expression, he imparted his favours to them ;—he won the affection and hearts of all ;—he left not one in misery behind him, in whatever respected those moderate comforts of life, which best befit their stations, and which are ever most favourable to their moral behaviour.

The young men and women on his estates, who distinguished themselves by uncommon ingenuity, industry, and good conduct, he marked with particular favour, and gave each of them some token of his regard, which was an incentive to their future exertions. To youth of opening genius, (we mean who shewed something of originality or invention in their callings,) he became a willing patron ;—and never failed to carry them forward, by pecuniary aid, and to establish them in that branch of business, or mechanism, in which they excelled. After making, every where, a very minute inquiry into the effects of his last visit to his people, and especially into the use they made

of the small performance of a moral nature which he had then distributed among them, —and having received a most satisfactory account of the effects of his good counsels and benevolent actions towards them, he returned to Munster Abbey, with sensations which baffle all the descriptions of men.

Ye great ones of this world ! we humbly and respectfully beseech you to hold ever in your view such noble models of exalted virtue :—then shall you taste a species of felicity, which in vain you pursue in the gratification of frivolous amusement, fashionable follies, and in the listless and melancholy haunts of intemperance and sensuality.

After Belford and Aurelia returned to their paradise, another scheme of benevolence engaged the heart of this singular man. It regarded his brother Charles,—and we shall very shortly relate it, after mentioning the reason why he made not one in visiting the estates of his brother.

Charles had been, in early life, much indebted to a family in the vicinity of Munster Abbey, for their affectionate attentions to him. He had learned, that, amidst all his errors and strayings from the paths of wisdom, in former days, the two worthy heads of this family, and their eldest son, were his steady and unwearied advocates in every company; that they uniformly presaged his return "to his brother's house," as a penitential and a virtuous man. The name of this family was Draper.

Charles spent the days of his brother's absence from home at Draper-hall,—and was received with most marked attentions and affection, above common fashionable politeness. He returned not however to his brother, until he had obtained the promise of all the family to pay an early visit to Munster Abbey, and to spend some days with his brother and niece; for they had only paid their respects in form at Belford's arrival.

The scheme we have just hinted at, and which Belford was so sanguine to accom-

plish, was to get his brother persuaded to marry, as soon as he could fix his mind with prudence ;—for Charles was but a young man, not yet more than thirty-five years of age,—tall, handsome, and in every respect had the appearance of a man of birth and fashion. But, above all, he had a benignity in his countenance, which was, in fact, acquired by his long return to the habits of order, the practice of virtue, and the spirit of a manly and benevolent religion. For, had he continued in the habits of riot and dissipation, these noble expressions of countenance would have forsaken him.—The discerning eye will at once distinguish the poor miserable rake from the man of temperance and virtue, by the very external traits of his countenance.

Belford did not need to employ eloquence or argument to induce a brother who revered and loved him, to comply with his counsels. He gave him his assurance that he would lose no time in looking out for a young lady possessed of that character, and of these accomplishments which he considered indispensibly necessary to ren-

der a man of virtue and of *some taste*, (as he modestly expressed himself) happy through life. He insinuated to his brother, that, during his visit at Draper-hall, the eldest daughter of that worthy family had *more* than attracted his attention ;—she had made no small impression on his heart. But “ I am determined, my dear brother, (he added) from my experience and observation in life, to observe the sacred adage, to take no momentuous step in life without serious deliberation, and without employing time to form a proper decision. I have resolved to discover, above all, the temper of her to whom I shall give my hand and heart. Many other qualities I know are important in a partner for life,—but without this, all, all lose their virtue. A few weeks hence, the family of Draper-hall are to pay you a visit, and, during their stay here, my eyes nor my understanding shall not be unemployed. And I intreat, my brother, that you yourself will make your silent observations on Miss Louisa Draper, for her person is intuitively unexceptionable.

Belford was overjoyed to find Charles so much disposed to enter into his views,—more especially as he had, during the time he made the visit to his estates, learned, that one of the finest places in England, not above nine or ten miles from Munster Abbey, was to be exposed to sale at Christie's in Pall Mall, five or six weeks hence. An estate of three thousand a-year,—highly cultivated,—most enchantingly situated,—and adorned by a mansion-house built in the Gothic stile. The money which Charles now possessed, (for in part he was now proprietor of the sum in the funds which we have mentioned) was more than equal to the purchase ;—and he proposed the scheme to his brother, who, to the end of Belford's life, acquiesced with ready consent to every scheme he devised for him, and to every counsel which he offered him.

The attorney of the family forthwith received orders to appear at the sale, and to go a certain length in his offers for Bennington Castle. The purchase was made,—all necessary rights and titles to the estate drawn out, and put in registration ;—

and Charles Belford was now an opulent squire, not two hours journey from the revered author (under heaven) of his happy independence.

After Belford had performed an act of generosity to his brother, of which no age affords many examples, he resolved to pay a visit, which he had long intended, to one of the worthiest characters in the land, and one of his own first favourites. This was a Mr John Hammond, a vicar on one of his estates, about fifteen miles from Munster Abbey. Here he spent eight or ten days, with that ineffable pleasure and satisfaction which flow from rational and virtuous conversation, where two souls are in perfect unison. Hammond, like Belford, was a man of letters, and a polished gentleman.—He was also a man of public spirit, and, like every worthy Briton, enthusiastically attached to his King, and to the Constitution of his country. In the discharge of the duties of his function he was surpassed by no clergyman of any rank in the Church.—With such a man Belford must necessarily enjoy the highest mental repast. This good man.

had ample experience, that the "various turns of fortune ponder." His story is worthy of being transmitted to posterity, for more reasons than one;—though that one is important, as will be seen by that detail of it.

Mr Hammond was the son of a respectable merchant in the city of Norwich. He was the second of four sons, all of whom became prosperous in the world, so far as the acquisition of wealth, or, at least, something more than competency, can be called prosperity.

After the best education at school which Norwich could afford, he was sent to Cambridge, where he very soon distinguished himself by assiduity in his studies, by superior abilities, and by exemplary correctness of manners:—of course, he received very marked attentions from some of the first professors of the University. He carried the premium on several occasions, by distinguishing himself by the superiority of his compositions on literary subjects; and left his *alma mater* with the reputation of

one of the first scholars of his age it ever could boast of.

He early discovered a strong propensity to go into holy orders ; and his father, who was a man of sense and virtue, not only did not thwart his inclinations, but cherished the good dispositions he discovered in his amiable son.

In the twenty second year of his age, he entered into priest's orders:—and in eighteen months afterwards, he was called to an office of a very sacred nature, which requires not only much caution, and the manners and address of a gentleman, but the superior qualities also of a good understanding, and a well-principled mind. The office we mean, was chaplain to a regiment. Never was a young man of his profession more fortunate in a department of this nature. He remained five years with one of the most respectable corps in the British service.—During this space, all his officers, from the Colonel to the youngest subaltern, discovered such particular respect and attention,—nay, partiality and affection to him,

as could not, upon so excellent a spirit as Hammond, fail to produce a powerful reciprocal effect.

It is worthy of observation, that no churchman has ever displayed more of the manners and behaviour of a well-bred gentleman, (fascinating to all men, except the rude and vulgar) and of the decorum of the clerical character, than such as have been sometime in the society of men of worth and merit in the army.

On the other hand, there are too many melancholy exceptions, owing both to the previous defective education of chaplains, and of the younger officers of many corps.—So it is in all societies of men.—But Hammond's happiness was chiefly the effect of his own pleasant and agreeable manners, his various conversation, his talent for anecdote, and, above all, of his attention to every soldier at quarters.—Not one of the private men but adored him. The additional allowance he had from a kind father, enabled him to do many kind offices to the men who had families,—he entered into all their distresses,—he was truly a partner in their

woes,—and he was indeed their affectionate friend, as well as their faithful chaplain.

The fame of this superior young man reached Munster Abbey. Belford was charmed with the accounts he had often heard of him from a young officer, the son of a neighbouring squire who had been to see his father on leave of absence. This young man, on a visit to Belford, expatiated largely in praise of Mr Hammond, and asserted, with youthful ardour, that there was not an officer or soldier in the regiment, who did not revere, and love him with all their heart,—for (he added) he is the delightful, but exemplary companion of all the gentlemen of the regiment,—and the father of all the men.

At this period, that is about four years and nine months after Hammond had joined the regiment, a living of five hundred a year in the gift of Belford, became vacant.

Many an express was sent, and many a call made at Munster Abbey, immediately on the demise of the former incumbent.

High political influence was exerted in favour of several young men of family. But Belford was in every thing a man of principle. He had previously formed a resolution, when the old gentleman of fourscore, who had lately held the living, became wholly unable to discharge the duties of his office, to look out with care for a clergyman entirely suited to his own taste:—a man of piety, of learning, and of agreeable manners; more especially as the parish, where this vicarage lay, required a person who would devote much of his time and attention to the inspection of the people. To explain causes here, would be unpleasant and indelicate,—nor is it necessary.

Belford resisted all solicitations with the utmost firmness;—but one loquacious orator, in favour of a young clergyman, the son of a respectable man not many miles from Munster Abbey, disgusted him so much by his eloquence, and by the rapidity with which he expressed himself, that he determined to have the living disposed of to his own mind with the utmost expedition.

Heaven favoured his views:—Mr. Hammond's name was accidentally mentioned at Belford's table by the young officer we have mentioned, and a single post was not lost to make every farther enquiry, which duty and prudence required.—And, in a very short while, Mr Hammond was inducted into the living of Woodland.

The people, who are always well disposed, except where they are misled by the base and designing, had already anticipated the happiness they were to enjoy from the fame of this young man. And his reception by them was a demonstration of their affection.

In the near vicinity of Woodland, lived a family of singular worth, with whom Hammond became very early acquainted after his settlement. The name of the gentleman was Squire Langhorne of Rosehall. He was blessed with an excellent wife, two sons, and two daughters. Mr Hammond was charmed with the manners of this family, because they were so congenial to his own. Uniform decorum was mingled with

hilarity, and innocent pastime with serious occupations. The eldest son was bred to the bar, and was now resident in the temple:—the second was a lieutenant in the navy:—all who remained at home, then, were Mr Langhorne and the ladies.

Miss Langhorne was endowed with external charms, and mental accomplishments, which could not fail to strike every visitor. She was affable, gentle, polite, and eloquent; though, like a young lady of sense, she spoke but little. Miss Langhorne, however, was not quite in the *ton*,—for she was remarkably pious:—But her piety never appeared but by her conduct, and by her conversation, only in select society, ever marking time and place, and never “casting pearls” before unworthy objects.

Such a character could not escape Hammond, who was “feelingly alive to each fine impulse.” He saw, and he admired Miss Langhorne on his first visit. The more of her society he was honoured with, the more did her charms of mind and person attract

his esteem and affection. He felt a strong ambition rising in his soul, to render himself reciprocally agreeable to this amiable young lady :—but to accomplish this grand object of his heart, he resolved not to repeat his visits too frequently, and thus neglect his important duty, and wound the peace of his own mind. He was so firm and steady in his principles, that he concluded, if Miss Langhorne was *indeed* the lovely and respectable character which she *appeared* to be, he could not act a more wise and prudent part to gain her esteem, perhaps to win her heart, than to discover, in every part of his conduct, a strict sense of honour and duty.

He judged rightly. Hammond's character and manners had made already no small impression on Miss Langhorne's heart. But she was prudent and guarded; and, like every young woman of sense, she was resolved to guard her heart to the utmost of her power, in case Mr Hammond should make any serious propositions, till such time as she should attain as perfect knowledge of

his temper and disposition as possible. Her precaution deserves applause,—but here it was unnecessary.

Seven months after this excellent vicar was settled at Woodland, he became the husband of the amiable Miss Langhorne,—with the full consent of her worthy parents.

Trained up by a mother who was thoroughly versed in the whole art of domestic economy, Mrs Hammond, though she brought but a slender fortune with her to Woodland vicarage, became soon a pattern to the families around her, (not for being a *notable* wife, for that is a vexatious quality) for her elegant simplicity of table, and the whole of her family management. England undoubtedly excels all the nations of the world in neatness and simplicity : We refer not to the higher and middle classes only, but even to the lower class, who, in general, are more cleanly than any common people in Europe.

Hammond's house was the resort of many young men who were to follow the same profession with himself. He delighted in their society, (for the worthy of them only could find acceptance at Woodland). By his conversation, and by his example, he conveyed instruction to their minds, and improvement to their manners ;—and, by the pleasantry and affability of his conversation, he gained their hearts. The vicarage was never without one or two of these e-leves. For this good man asserted, on every occasion, that with him it was an established and favourite opinion, that every clergyman of independence, who did not make it a point of conscience to have students of theology, and young men who had not yet been promoted to livings, frequently about him, was a disgrace to his profession ; and, if law could permit, should be expelled from the church. An excellent and benevolent idea ! For, who are so qualified to train up young men in knowledge and virtue, as their superiors in the same train of studies ; and, more especially, when they are men of exemplary conduct.

Man is born to trouble. The joys of this world are often mingled, by the hand of infinite wisdom, with bitter alloy. "Where we cannot unriddle,—we must learn to trust."

A cloud was soon to cover a part of the future days of our admirable Hammond.

The health of his beloved spouse had never been perfectly re-established, since she had been affected by a fever about three years before her marriage. Not long after their happy union, Mrs Hammond became extremely nervous ;—sleep forsook her,—and she discovered visible symptoms of some serious internal ailment. The first medical aid in the kingdom was called in ; but it was not the will of heaven that she should "see many days." During her illness, which was of no less than five months duration, she preserved a serenity of mind, and even cheerfulness in conversation, which alternately affected her admirable partner, with rapture and grief. Actuated by the purest principles, she had her beloved sister and other young ladies frequent-

ly with her, before whom she displayed a fortitude and dignity of mind which could not fail to make the deepest and the happiest impressions.

These impressions were indeed powerful, as her most amiable sisters, and others of her select friends, who visited her in her distress, often acknowledged, after she had ascended into the regions of bliss.

Let us not fix our eye too long on this affecting scene : It was the destination of mysterious Providence, that within the eleventh month after the union of these angelic spirits, Mrs Hammond was to be transplanted into these realms, " where sorrow, weeping, and pain, are no more."—She gently slept away, in the arms of her beloved and afflicted husband.

Grief would have overwhelmed this excellent man, and rendered him unqualified for the duties of life, had he not learned those lessons of piety, and been enabled to practise them, which are the solace of the soul in every affliction in this sublunary

state. He mourned as a man of a sublime and dignified mind,—that is, he mourned as a christian.

The family of Draperhall arrived at the time they had appointed with Charles to visit Munster Abbey. Their stay was necessarily short ; as matters of the last moment were now soon to engage the whole attention of Belford and his sweet Aurelia. Letters had been received the evening before Mr Draper and family arrived, with accounts of Lord Altamont, which, had he wrote more early, would have filled Belford's mind with alarm, and lovely Aurelia's with distraction. His Lordship, for three weeks, had been afflicted by a severe fever, the effect of cold,—but was now perfectly recovered. And he informed his Aurelia, with regret, that the period of his arrival would be prolonged necessarily for four or five weeks beyond the time he had fixed for returning to England. The epistle our amiable young nobleman wrote to his beloved, was worthy of the benignity of his heart, and congenial to the ardour of his love. Their souls were in perfect harmony :

nature had blessed them with the most amiable and virtuous dispositions, and education had adorned them with every quality and accomplishment which can ensure felicity after the hymenean knot is tied. Aurelia's love was, if possible, heightened to a higher degree of warmth, when she found her lord so intense in acquiring a stock of knowledge and information, which he might turn to the highest account on his return to his native land. After pouring forth his heart to her who had full possession of it, in all the strains of enraptured passion, he entertained her with a short sketch, or plan, of the manner in which he was to employ his future life, if it should be the will of Heaven that he should settle on his estate. The plan was worthy of its author. It was a scheme of pure benevolence. It was not fanciful and aerial. It was practicable, for it had been practised in all ages by those superior beings who are born to bless mankind.

He expressed, in language moderated by reason and good sense, his impatience to embrace her whom his soul loved:—but,

knowing her exalted understanding, and her admiration of every species of excellence, he assured her, that no inducement under heaven could retard him in setting out for Britain, but his ambition to appear more worthy of the first and most accomplished of her sex.

Altamont wrote also to Belford in a stile suited to the dignified character whom he addressed. It was obvious that his esteem and affection for this good man were as high as one mortal can entertain for another. He gave a short relation of his studies and general pursuits, adding a few remarks on that happy country where he had resided for some time ;—and concluded, by requesting of him, that if it was consistent with his many plans of beneficence and attention to his people, he would meet him at Dover six weeks from the date of his letter. In sweet, soft, and endearing language, he respectfully hoped that his Aurelia might be prevailed on to attend him to that place.

The request of Altamont to Belford would have been perfectly agreeable, independent-

ly of every other consideration, but, in fact, he had long resolved (for years past) to pay a visit, in the county of Kent, to an old Oxonian acquaintance ; and it was fixed that, as soon as some important matters, respecting the improvement of his estates, were settled, he should accomplish his intended visit.

Not one day passed in which this admirable man, and his angelic daughter, did not perform some act of beneficence to farmer, cottager, labourer, or the poor people for miles around. His family was an emblem of paradise :—His domestics adored him. Indeed, he was at infinite pains to find servants of the first character for virtue and sobriety, and he was almost universally successful. But his own example, and Aurelia's too, contributed to establish the habits of virtue which they had brought into the family with them. As Belford was a man of sterling understanding, he resolved, from the time he became the head of a household, to place himself in idea, at all times, in the situation of his servants, and to follow the sacred rule,—“ To do to them what

he would wish his master to do to him, if placed in that humble station." Scarce ever a servant left him, but to be settled in a married state, or to be advanced to a higher situation. He delighted to reward merit in every rank or calling ;—and he had always a number of young persons, of both sexes, in his service, whom he was careful to educate in the plain and simple principles of religion, and in the knowledge of their moral duties ; to any of superior quickness, who discovered marks of genius, he was particularly attentive, and never failed to advance them in the world.



END OF SECOND VOLUME.

